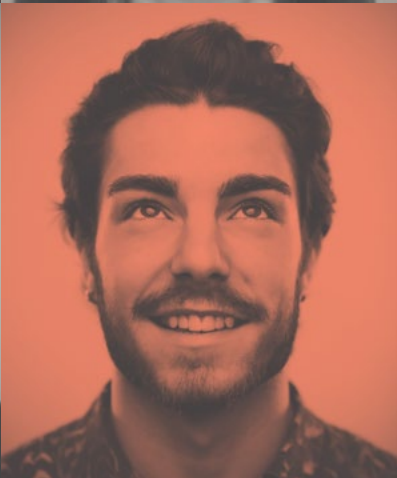


Preparing for Job-Exchanges

AN EVALUATION OF NOREC'S TRAINING COURSES



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Preparing for Job-Exchanges

AN EVALUATION OF NOREC'S TRAINING COURSES

PROJECT TEAM

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SUMMARY

In this report we evaluate to what extent Norec's different course models and training contribute to relevant and meaningful job-exchanges. The evaluation is based on data collected from previous reports and evaluations, two surveys, one survey directed to previous participants and the other for existing Norec partners. In addition, we collected data through in-depth interviews with Norec staff, trainers, partners and participants.

Training is an essential part of Norec's methodology and efforts in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. Norec provides training courses for its partners and participants, however, in this evaluation, we only assess the courses provided to the participants. The courses are designed to encourage active participation and make use of a variety of teaching methods to increase motivation, to be a proponent of change and to foster personal reflection. By creating reflection among the participants, Norec also succeeds in making the participants reflect upon themselves as being a part of a global development partnership.¹

Norec is highly successful in achieving their training and learning goals. Norec partners and participants perceive the Norec trainings as useful, relevant and fit for purpose. South participants are slightly more positive about the courses than their North colleagues.

There is an opportunity to improve the learning outcomes from Norec's homecoming seminars. The courses are currently responding first and foremost to the participants' personal challenges and needs while on exchange, and we believe that Norec will increase the learning outcomes if the courses also focus more on the professional re-integration of the participants.

Norec partners are also conducting preparatory and homecoming courses. These are important, in particular as they provide information and knowledge

of importance for the actual job execution. Due to little collaboration between Norec and the partner organisations, and unclarity on how the parties may complement each other's training, a more structured collaboration would most likely increase the learning outcomes for the participants.

A key factor for the success of the Norec trainings, is that they provide for physical events where people from all over the world meet to learn, listen and create networks. The participatory methodology is important for creating the level of reflection and insights that Norec is aiming to achieve.

Furthermore, there are good opportunities for moving parts of the trainings to digital platforms. In the preparatory phase we believe that introduction and theoretical topics may be moved to interactive and participatory e-learning modules. During the exchanges, Norec could consider contributing with closer follow-up through digital platforms for further capacitation and skill development of participants.

The training is found to be cost-efficient, with comparable costs to peer organisations. We have, however, identified some opportunities for cost-saving. There are also efforts underway in Norec to reduce the organisation's carbon footprint, which also have a positive impact on costs.

Norec's new strategy states a goal of being a centre of competence for international exchanges. Norec has a unique position for this as a leading actor in the area of international exchanges. For Norec to fulfil the role as centre of competence, the organisation needs to institutionalise learning and knowledge management and build an online knowledge bank for training and international exchange. This could in part be achieved by building on the capacities of its instructors, establishing a corps of instructors as a central part of the organisation's competence.

¹ Norec Strategy 2022

OVERVIEW OF FIGURES, CLOUDS AND TABLES

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCOPE AND SAMPLING

The purpose of this assignment is to evaluate to what extent Norec's different course models and trainings contribute to relevant and meaningful job-exchanges. The evaluation will investigate the outcomes and the potential impact at individual level, and its contribution to the goal of capacity development and organisational learning at institutional level. In addition, Norec seeks to merge the two portfolios, youth and professional programme, into one. As well as an elaboration on how their usage of e-learning and education technology (EdTech) can be further developed and implemented.

The key elements to be assessed in this assignment, according to the Terms of Reference, are:

1. To what extent Norec's different course models contribute to relevant and meaningful job-exchanges at individual level, and therefore contribute to the goal of increased capacity development and organisational learning at institutional level?
2. To make recommendations on how Norec can develop its courses towards a cost-efficient programme with a decreased carbon footprint and capacity for a higher number of participants.
3. To provide input on how Norec – as a centre of competence on exchange cooperation – can capitalise on the competence acquired and retained from organising, designing and carrying out training courses.

Norec provides training for their two main programmes, professional job-exchanges and volunteer exchange, for participants between 18 and 35 years. In addition, partner organisations offer in-house trainings. The training models to be covered by this evaluation include, as detailed in the Terms of Reference, are:

1. Training for participants in Norec's *professional job-exchanges*:
 - Norec E-learning modules
 - Norec Training 1 – preparatory courses
 - Norec Training 2 – homecoming seminars
2. Training for participants on Norec's *volunteer-exchanges*:
 - Norec Youth Camp
 - Partner organisations' preparatory courses
 - Partner organisations' homecoming seminars

1.2 THE ROLE OF TRAINING IN NOREC

Training is an essential part of Norec's methodology and efforts in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Norec aims at strengthening partnerships that are working to find solutions towards the SDGs through the mechanism of mutual exchanges. The assumption is that the exchanges provide greater knowledge, new skills and perspectives for both individuals and organisations. The exchanges take place in partnerships between institutions, organisations and companies. The mutual exchange of employees is expected to stimulate sharing and learning across national borders and to give organisations and past participants access to regional and international networks.

The Norec training is an integral part of Norec's Theory of Change (ToC), and the training components are developed to enable the partners and participants to prepare and ensure a proper follow-up throughout the exchange period.²

The ToC operates with two levels of change; 1) the individual (participant), and 2) institutional (partner organisation) level. There is a bottom-up perspective, assuming that the changes at the participant level will

² Norec Theory of Change document

lead to broader benefits, in particular for the partner organisations. The assumption is that the participants in the exchange are assigned tasks and that expose them for a new working and cultural context that provide them with new skills and knowledge. This, in turn, is expected to contribute to capacity building in the organisations.

Norec provides training courses for the partners and its participants, however, in this evaluation, we only assess the courses provided to the participants. The courses are designed to encourage active participation and make use of a variety of teaching methods to increase motivation, to be a proponent for change and to foster personal reflection. In this way, Norec aims at ensuring that all those involved reflect over the development partnership and put it in a global context.³

1.3 METHODOLOGY

Data for this evaluation has been collected through document review, surveys and in-depth interviews. Through the document review in the **desk study**, we investigated Norec's guidelines, course material strategies and reviews, as well as a sample of partner applications and reports from both the professional and volunteer programmes. The documents also cover Norec's course material. The desk study also assessed the course content discussed in interviews with peer organisations. A detailed list of documents collected is attached in appendix 2.

Surveys

The evaluation has administered **two surveys**; one that was delivered to representatives of partner organisations, and the second one to course participants from the last two years. The survey questionnaires were structured with both closed and open questions. The respondents were presented with statements to which

they responded using a Likert scale⁴ for the closed questions. The Likert scale has the following response options:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

The **participant survey** was distributed to 1260 persons, whereas 302 responded to the survey. Out of these, 236 were South participants while 61 were North participants. **The partner survey** was distributed to 226 persons, whereas 70 responded. 9 out of the respondents were North partners, while 61 were South partners, both from South-North and South-South partnerships. The partner survey thus had a higher response rate than the participant survey. This might be explained by the fact that partner organisations have a closer relationship to Norec and therefore find the survey relevant for their own role in the Norec exchange programme. Both surveys were sent out twice to increase the response rate.

The data collected from the surveys are presented in the report as either figures or clouds. The figures present percentage of the responses after the Likert scale. The figures in the tables are presented with accurate numbers (i.e. 84,03%). However, in the analysis and text, the numbers have been rounded to the nearest whole number (i.e.84%) to be more reader friendly. Further, the surveys included several open questions. As 302 persons responded to the surveys, we chose to analyse these through cloud illustrations, which means that the size of the words in the cloud will increase in line with how many times it has been mentioned by the respondents. The clouding thus enables a visualisation of the most frequent answers from the survey data. The coding of the respondents' answers was manually

³ Norec Strategy 2022

⁴ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/psychology/likert-scale>



counted due to typos, shorter and longer answers, synonym variations and variance in the specificity of answers.

Interviews

The surveys were followed by **in-depth interviews** with Norec staff, course staff, partner organisations and previous exchange participants. North/South, South/North and South/South partners and participants were interviewed. In total, 27 people were interviewed during this qualitative means of data collection. Due to Covid19, all interviews were conducted digitally through Zoom or Teams. The in-depth interviews used to dive deeper into the tendencies and patterns we found through the quantitative data. The interviews provided useful which enabled us to conduct a qualitative analysis of the courses. Weak connectivity was however a challenge during several of the interviews with previous participants from the South. A list of interviewees is attached in appendix 1.

Workshop

In-depth interviews were also held with selected **comparable international organisations**. Several organisations were identified in consultation with Norec. Of these the evaluation succeeded in arranging interviews with UN Volunteers (UNV), MS Denmark and Comundo. They are, respectively, international, governmental and non-governmental organisations, that work with volunteers and / or professional placements between countries.

The last stage of the data collection was a **participatory workshop with Norec staff**, carried out digitally on Teams. KPMG presented key findings and provided four follow-up questions to be discussed and responded by Norec. These responses and feedback were used in the development of recommendations for the way forward.

2. ASSESSING NOREC TRAINING COURSES

Norec's preparation training consists of courses provided by both partner organisations and Norec. Norec conducts the Norec Youth Camp training for the volunteer programme and Norec Training 1 for the professional programme, hereafter referred to as preparatory courses. Partner organisations in the volunteer programme also receive funding from Norec for preparatory training and homecoming seminars for the participants. Norec's homecoming seminar is only provided to the professional programme participants and it is called Norec Training 2.

In this chapter, we assess the Norec trainings only. First, we examine the preparatory courses and thereafter the homecoming seminar. We review the effectiveness, relevance and impact of the training. Finally, we provide recommendations on how the Norec trainings may be adjusted and improved.

The following courses are assessed:

Norec training for participants on the *professional job-exchanges*:

- Norec E-learning modules
- Norec Training 1 – preparatory courses
- Norec Training 2 – homecoming seminars

Norec training for participants on the *volunteer-exchanges*:

- Norec Youth Camp – preparatory courses

2.1 NOREC'S PREPARATORY COURSES

2.1.1 Learning objectives

The overall objective of the preparation course is to prepare the participants for the exchange. This is for both the volunteer and the professional exchanges. Both partner organisations and Norec contribute with courses and there are two overall goals of Norec's preparational training.

The first goal is to prepare the participants as actors within international development. Norec provides two preparation courses to date; the Norec Youth Camp (volunteer programme) and the Norec preparatory course (professional programme). Both are conducted as physical events where participants attend, share and contribute in the participatory training over a period of 3,5 working days.

The learning objective for the *Youth Camp* is for the participants to understand their own role as a Norec participant, to learn about Norec's role in Norwegian development policy and to become part of the Norec global network of partners, participants and exchange programmes. The current learning modules in the Youth Camp are about Norec, youth leadership, global issues and intercultural communication.

The participants of the professional exchange programme participate in the *participatory course*, where the learning objective is to provide the participants with 'Norec Skills'. These include; critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, communication and collaboration, and interdisciplinary and global understanding. This includes being able to see the world from multiple perspectives, reflect upon their position in a global society and discuss how they are part of a larger community of partners and participants. Furthermore, to identify personal and professional challenges related to living in another cultural context, and to identify and use specific tools and approaches to prevent, minimise or overcome these challenges.

The second overall goal of the Norec training is to contribute to an inclusive and participatory training, and to foster personal reflection. The Norec courses are designed to encourage active participation and make use of a variety of teaching methods to increase motivation to be a proponent of change and to foster personal reflection. Active engagement is believed to

stimulate learning and increase motivation. The various methodological approaches include plenary and group discussions, role plays, self-studies and reflection, as well as more traditional lectures. The approaches are aiming at encouraging and contributing to critical thinking and problem solving, and to give valuable training in intercultural and interdisciplinary communication and cooperation. In this way, Norec ensures that all those involved reflect over the development partnership and put it in a global context.⁵

2.1.2 Goal achievement - to what extent Norec reaches their learning goals

Summary

The evaluation findings show that Norec reaches their goals related to the Norec training provided for the preparatory phase;

- *Participants find the preparatory courses useful, although South participants are more satisfied than North participants.*

- *Norec reaches their overall objective of making the participants reflect over their exchange as a part of a development partnership and to put it in a global context.*
- *Norec succeeds in achieving the second overall goal, which is conducting preparatory courses that encourage active participation, that gives valuable training in intercultural communication, and that foster personal reflection.*

2.1.3 Effectiveness

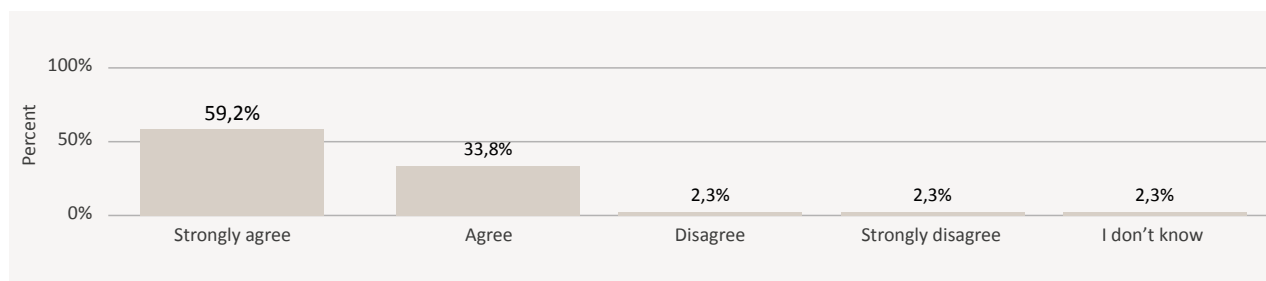
In this section we will look at effectiveness and to what extent Norec reaches its learning goals. The following elements will be described further: Usefulness; Being part of a global development partnership, and; Active participatory courses, fostering reflection.

Usefulness

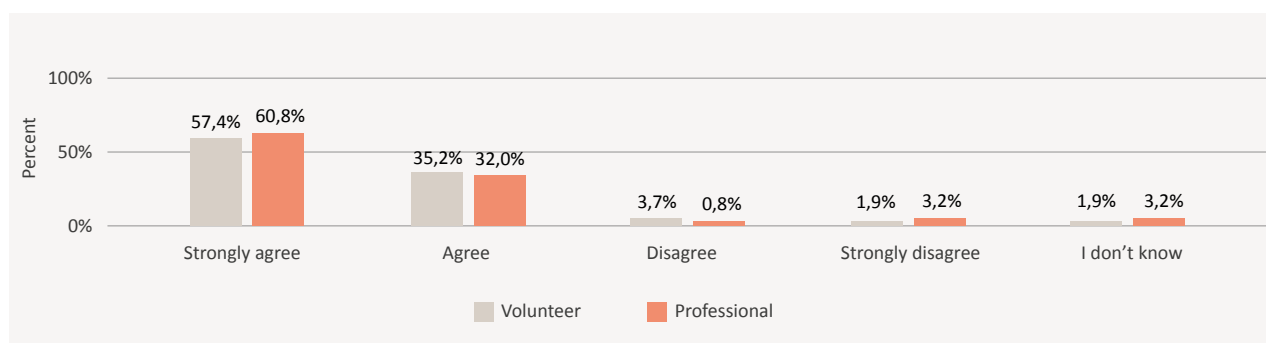
The evaluation demonstrates that the participants find the preparatory course useful. As we can see from the figure below, 93% of the respondents agree to the statement that the training was useful for their exchange.

⁵ Norec Strategy 2022

FIGURE 1: The training was useful for my exchange experience

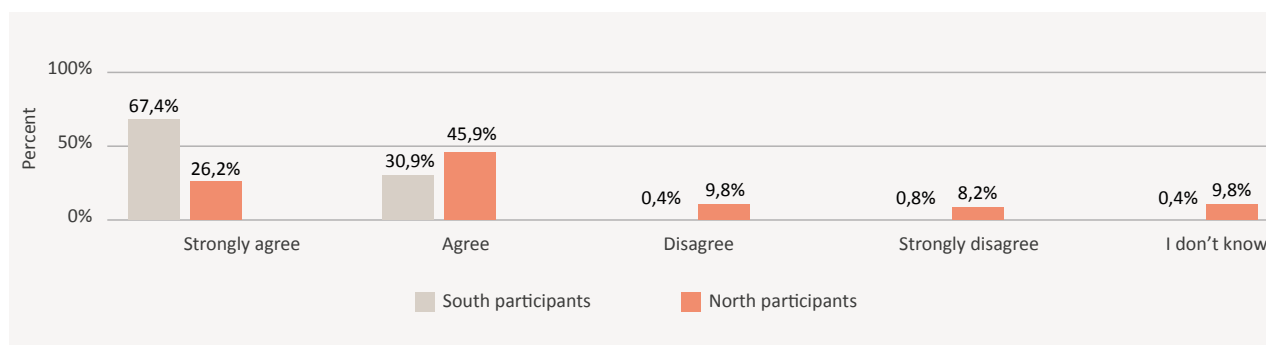


There is next to no difference in the responses from volunteer and professional participants, however, professionals are slightly more positive to the usefulness of the course than volunteers.



South participants, however, tend to find the participatory courses more useful than their colleagues from the North, as illustrated in the figure below. As we can see, 67% of the South participants strongly agree to the question of whether the training was useful to their exchange experience, in comparison to North participants, where only 26% strongly agree to the same statement. The in-depth interviews reveal that

North participants, in particular, find the cross cultural communication training useful, while the other topics to a less degree contribute to new learning for them. In addition, North participants seem to be more satisfied with the professional than the volunteer training. Several uttered, during the interviews, that the volunteer training did not challenge them sufficiently.



Being part of a global development partnership

For South participants the topic ‘Global development partnership’ is perceived as particularly useful. Data from both the participants’ survey and the in-depth interviews support this finding. The increased knowledge about global development partnership contributes to an insight and understanding of how their exchange is part of a larger agenda and anticipated change processes. This, in turn, also gives an increased understanding of the sustainability of the Norec exchange programme.

Active participatory courses, fostering reflection Norec also succeeds in achieving their second overall goal, which is conducting preparatory courses that encourage active participation, that give valuable training in intercultural communication, and that foster personal reflection.

94% of the survey respondents either strongly agree (48%) or agree (46%) that the courses were designed and delivered in a way that enabled them to participate in discussions and course work. In particular South participants highlight the novelty of being exposed to participatory methodologies. Several participants also claimed that they have taken similar methods into

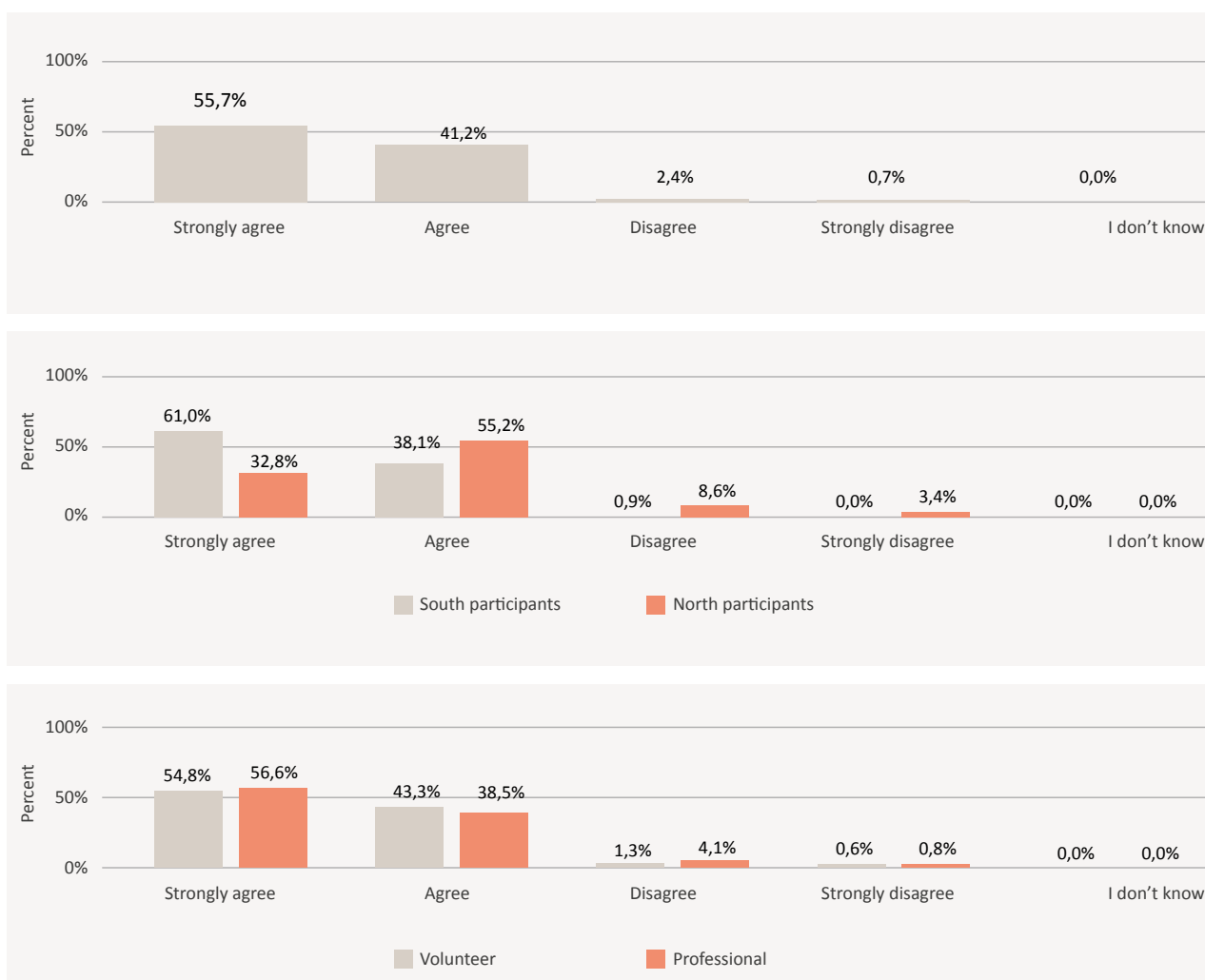
use in their daily work today – in their post exchange everyday life.

Language is a prerequisite for active involvement in the training. The survey reveals that 89% strongly agree or agrees that language was not a barrier for their learning in the training. The finding is backed up by our interviews, although the qualitative data from participants and instructors tends to nuance the survey; several claimed that large variation in language skills appeared to be the rule rather than the exception, which again would create challenges in the learning situation. Our interpretation is that the trainers and facilitators succeed in managing the language challenges and integrate them in the training sessions. When language barriers were met, several participants highlighted that the sessions would often teach through other methods, such as games and group work based on for example drawing, instead of speaking.

Norec assumes that the course design and the facilitation of participation also will be a proponent of change and foster personal reflection. Whether the trainings contribute as a proponent of change goes beyond our scope and focus, however, our data supports the goal of fostering personal reflection.

97% of the participants strongly agree or agree that the preparatory course made them more open-minded, as illustrated in figure 2 below. There is next to no difference between volunteer and professional participants in this regard, while North participants tend to be less positive than the South participants:

FIGURE 2: The course made me more open-minded: First table: Total answers. Second table: Answers divided between South and North participants. Third table: Answers divided between Volunteer and Professional participants.



Cross cultural understanding and communication is, in addition to global understanding, perceived as the most important learning outcome through the Norec preparatory courses. The cloud below illustrates that the participants find the training on intercultural communication as one of the most important elements. The finding is also strongly supported by our data from the interviews. Participants highlight the physical meeting arena *per se* as important, as it provides for encountering

with a mix of young people from different countries, cultures, ages and backgrounds. Further, and due to the training module on intercultural communication, the participants achieve both a theoretical understanding and concrete tools and methods for dealing with cross cultural meetings and communications while living and working in a new context. Cross cultural understanding and communication are learning outcomes that are appreciated both at a personal and a professional level.

The cloud below visualises the 228 answers received to the open-ended survey question concerning which part of the preparatory training that was particularly useful. The size of the key words in the cloud are generated based on the number of persons that inserted the key words. 33 of the respondents have included the word 'culture' into their open-end response, while 22 responded communication as the part of the training that was particularly useful. Several of the responses to this open question were also related to global understanding, such as development, cultural diversity and

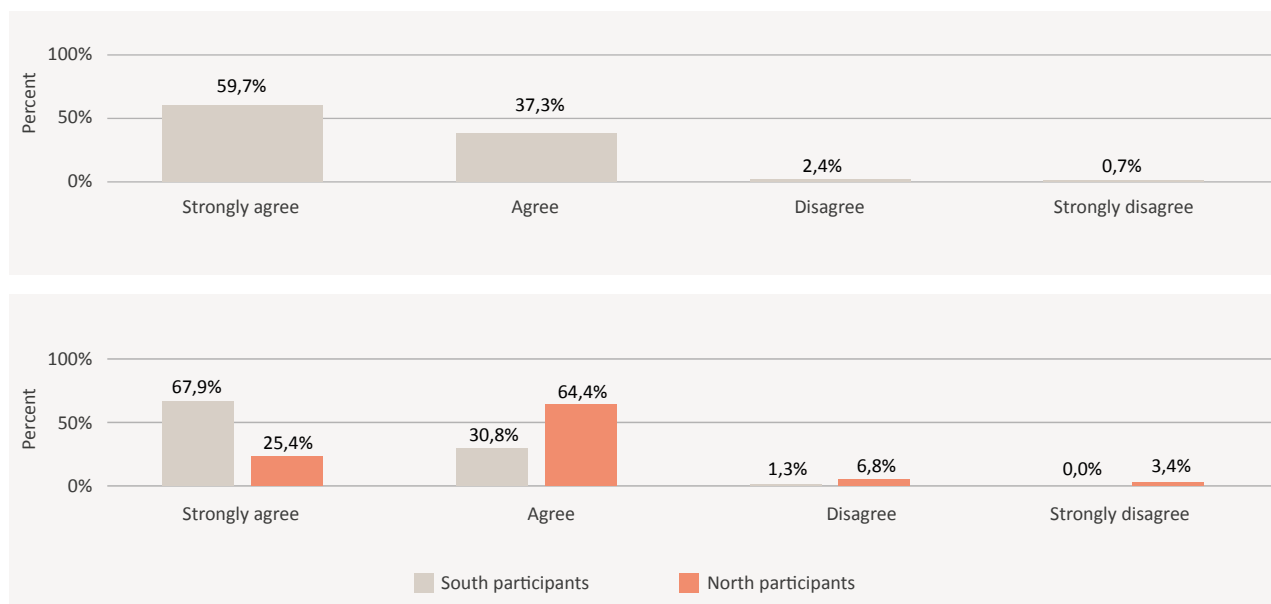
understanding the context of Sustainable Development Goals.

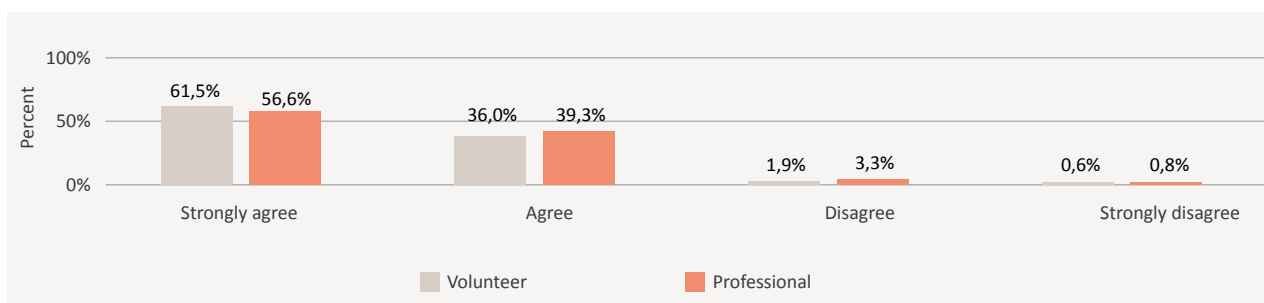
An important aspect of cross cultural understanding is to understand values and cultures different from your own. The figure below shows again the strong results of the cross cultural learning through the Norec training; 97% find the training helpful in understanding other cultures. Again, the South participants are more positive than their North colleagues, while the differences between the volunteer and professional programme are small.

CLOUD 1: The part of the training that was particularly useful:



FIGURE 3: The training helped me understand values and cultures different from my own: First table: Total answers. Second table: Answers divided between South and North participants. Third table: Answers divided between Volunteer and Professional participants.

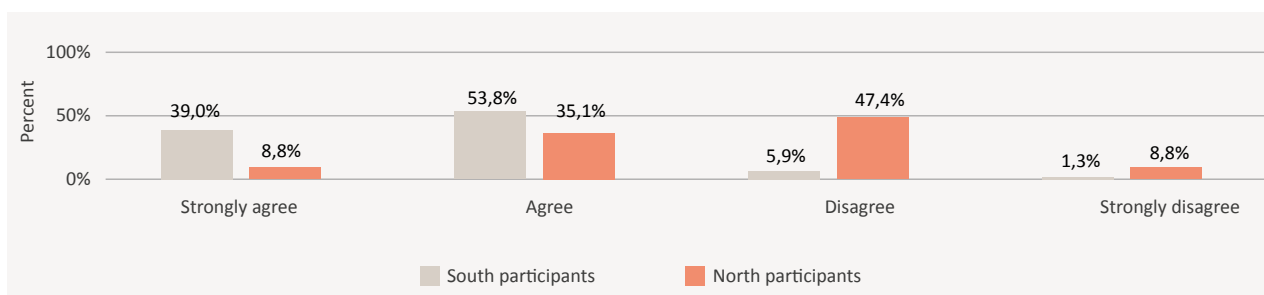




The preparatory course also succeeds in creating a safe space and a solid support network for the participants. This is particularly true for the South participants. The in-depth interviews revealed that the training courses are for many of them their first encounter with people from different continents, cultures, and backgrounds. This point was also raised by Norec staff and external course instructors. By including diverse groups into participatory training and learning, it also creates self-consciousness, reflections and gradually a mutual trust is built among the participants. This again contributes to open and sincere conversations among

the participants. This trust is particularly important in discussions the participants perceive as difficult topics; such as sexual harassment, homophobia and religion. 93% of the South participants highlight that strong friendships and networks are built, and that these are important during their exchange period. Other participants, who are 'in the same boat' contribute with valuable support to each other – both personally and professionally. These networks are less important for North participants; 44% agree they are important, while 56% disagree.

FIGURE 4: The relationships and friendships I acquired during the course gave me valuable support during my exchange



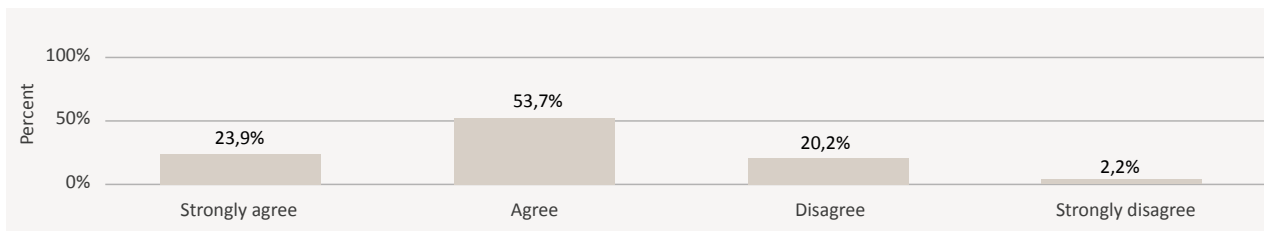
Inclusiveness

An important aspect of Norec's programmes is inclusiveness. To assess whether the objective of inclusiveness in regard to the training has been achieved, we have chosen to look into how Norec facilitates for people with disabilities, when needed. The figure below shows that Norec to a certain degree fulfils this objective. **78% respondents agree that the courses are well facilitated for people with disabilities**, however 22%, disagree. The interviews revealed that participants found Norec staff and external course instructors to be flexible and willing to accommodate for assistance, when needed. Their ability to provide

interpreters was highly appreciated by the Norec participants.

Norec partners, and not Norec, are responsible for recruitment of participants to the Norec programme. In the in-depth interviews we nevertheless asked the participants if they had any recommendations on how the seminars, on a general level, could contribute to more inclusiveness. In this regard, several participants suggested to include people living with disabilities in the training, as this would also mirror the diversity and inclusiveness goals in all parts of Norec activities.

FIGURE 5: The training was well facilitated for people with disabilities



2.1.4 Relevance

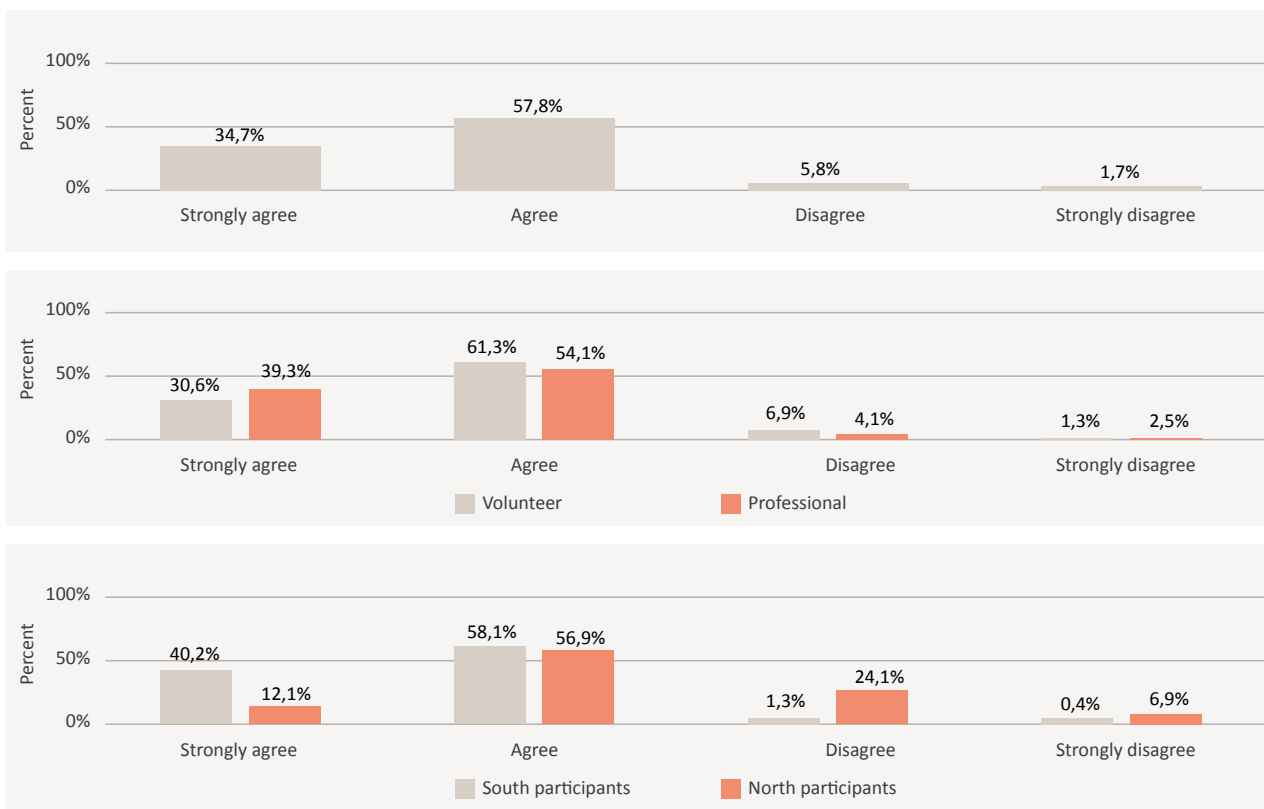
Below, we present in which ways the Norec courses are perceived as useful and relevant from the partners' and the participants' point of view. We are particularly looking into whether the courses respond to the challenges and the needs of the participants and partners in the Norec exchange programmes. Our key question is to what degree the participants' participatory learning correspond to their needs in order to be well prepared for an efficient and meaningful exchange.

We investigate what the partners and participants perceive as the most important training needs, and thereafter whether the Norec training accommodates these needs. Secondly, we investigate the relevance by assessing to what degree the training contributes with concrete tools that contribute to a smoother and more efficient exchange.

Training needs are met

The vast majority of Norec participants respond that the trainings satisfied their learning needs. 93% agree to this statement. However, as the figure below depicts, there is still room for improvement. Only 35% strongly agree with the statement, while 8% of the participants disagree. Participants on the professional programme (93%) are more slightly more likely to agree (92%) than volunteer participants (92%) to find the training to satisfy their learning needs. Again, we also see that South participants are more likely than North participants to agree that the training satisfies their training needs. 31% of the North participants respond that the training does not satisfy their learning needs.

FIGURE 6: The Training satisfied my learning needs: First table: Total answers. Second table: Answers divided between Volunteer and Professional participants. Third table: Answers divided between South and North participants.



Above, we highlighted that intercultural communication and global understanding were the topics that were perceived as most useful by the Norec participants. The interviews revealed that the participants found two additional topics to be important and relevant during the preparatory phase, in particular for the South participants. These were psycho-sociological resilience and professional preparation.

Regarding psycho-sociological resilience, the Norec exchange is for many young people their first experience in a long-term move and working in a country that differs quite substantively from their own. The course helps the participants in understanding, and learning techniques and tools on how to deal with stress and fear connected to the forthcoming exchange. Psycho-sociological resilience is thus perceived as important and a needed part of the preparation course. Professional preparedness was also highlighted as important among all participants. The Norec preparatory trainings are also in this regard highly appreciated, as they facilitate for meetings and information sharing with participants and coordinators from the same programme. Participants share useful information such as living conditions, challenges and duties at the workplace. These conversations contribute to adjusting the participants' expectations and are according to the participants highly valuable as it contributes to an enhanced professional preparation.

Elements that are currently missing in the Norec training are to a large degree linked to professional expectations and preparation, as visualised in the cloud below. There was no significant difference between North and South participants in this matter. Data from the survey and the in-depth interviews reveals a desire for a stronger focus on the preparation for the



concrete country and the host organisation that the participants are going to. Several participants call for a better preparation on how to cope with the everyday life and challenges connected to the specific context (10 respondents). This includes how to behave in the partner organisation and what to do if they for example get sick. Several participants highlighted that these issues could easily be treated by facilitating meetings between the "new" and "old" participants from the same programme. This could be done during the Norec preparatory training. Another feedback provided by participants, was a wish of increased financial management during the training, which was highlighted by 13 out of 166 respondents, as seen illustrated in the cloud below. The key words in the cloud below had the highest response rates to this open-ended question.

CLOUD 2: What other elements of training and knowledge should be included in the training?



Another means of examining the Norec trainings' relevance, is to assess whether the partner organisations find that the Norec training contributes to a good preparation for the participants. In this regard, our data shows that the partners perceive two topics as important for the preparatory training. One is the job-related preparation, which the partners themselves are responsible for. The other, is the need for preparing the participants and enabling them to cope in a new cultural context and making them understand that they are part of a larger global context, which are two key elements in the Norec training. **Consequently, the Norec training is also relevant for the partners' needs.** The cloud below shows the partners' assessment of the most important effects of the participant training, in different shapes and forms. The cloud summarises 67 open-ended answers. Some highlight the need of awareness of expectations, while others highlight



the need of ownership, as well as understanding the exchange programme. In addition, several partners highlight the need to prepare the participants for facing uncertainties during the exchange.

CLOUD 3: Partner’s assessment of the most important effects of the participant training

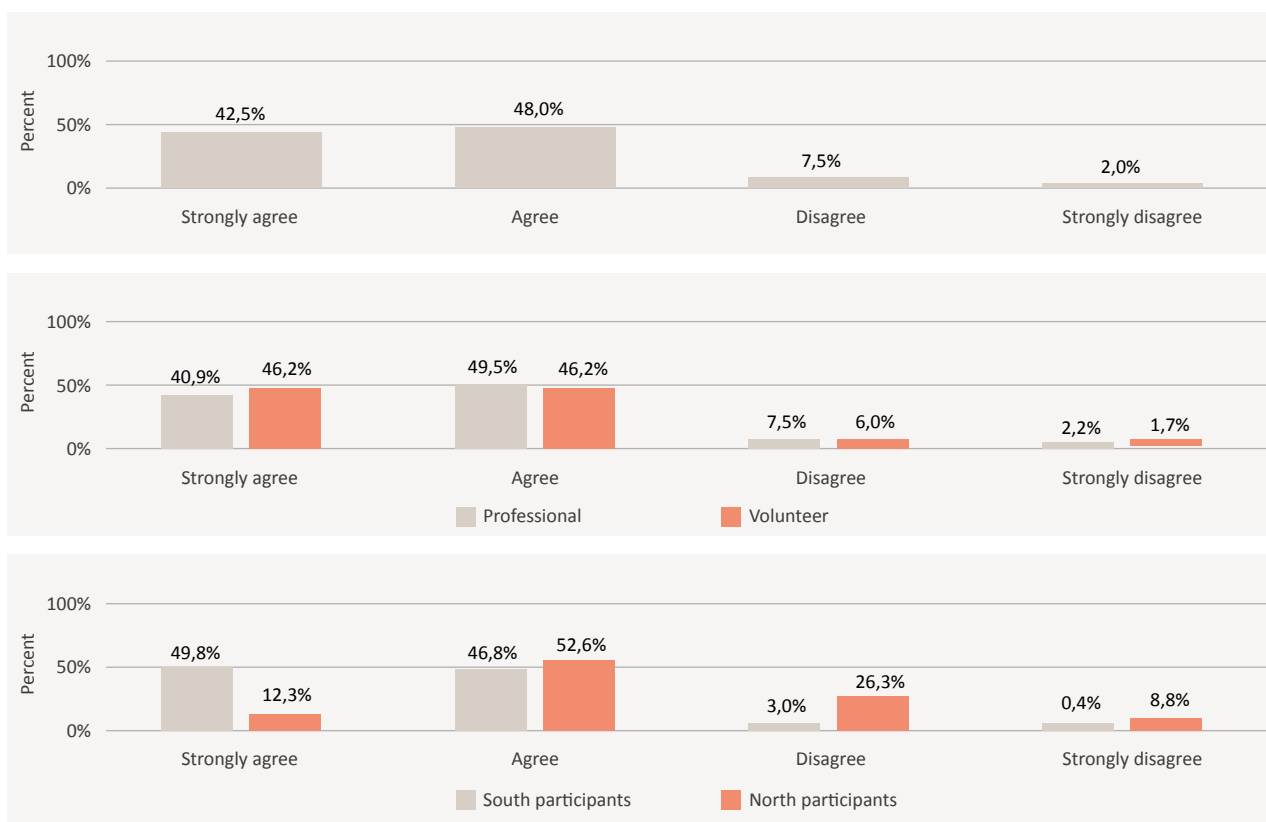


The training helps participants fit into their work
 Our second means of investigating the relevance of the Norec preparatory training, was to assess to what

degree it has contributed with concrete tools that affect the exchange in ways that makes it smoother and more efficient.

90,5% of the participants agree that the preparatory course has helped them fit into their work during the exchange. As we can see below, there are small variances between volunteer and professional participants, yet volunteer participants tend to be slightly more satisfied than professional participants. Volunteers (92%) agree slightly more to this point than the professional participants (90%). As many as 97% of the South participants agree to this statement, compared to 65% of the North participants. The higher score of the South participants might be linked to the fact that they also – as shown previously – find the training more relevant and in accordance to their needs. It is also worth to emphasise that 35% of the North participants, compared to only 3% of the South participants, do not see the training as helping them to fit into their work.

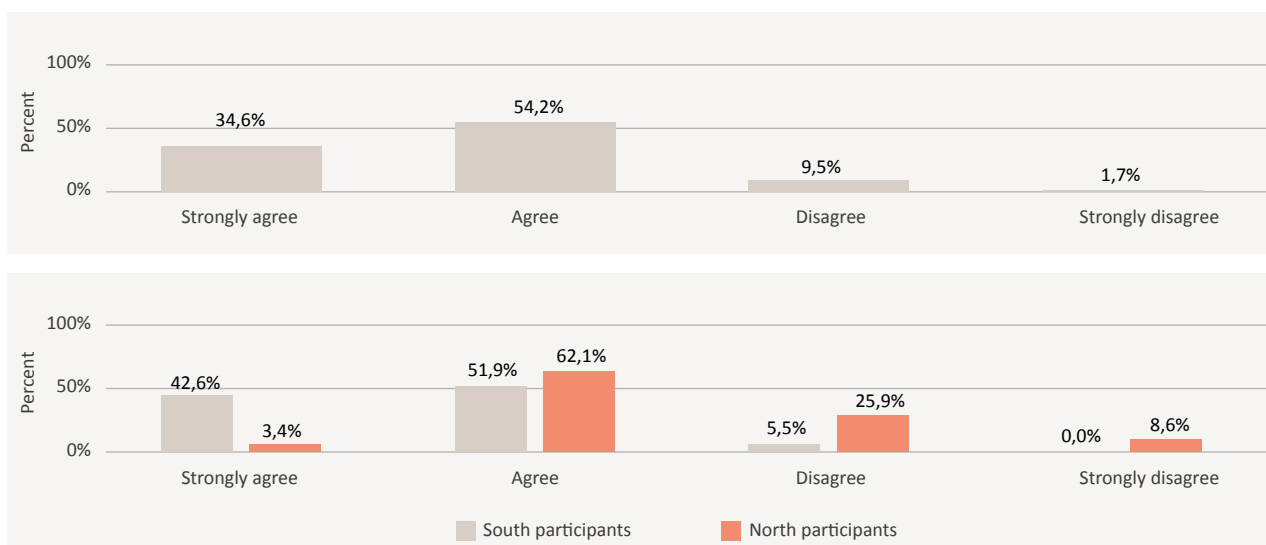
FIGURE 7: What I learned in the training helped me fit into my work during the exchange: First table: Total answers. Second table: Answers divided between Volunteer and Professional participants. Third table: Answers divided between South and North participants.



85% of the respondents, and South participants, also claim that the preparatory training made it easier for them to execute their work during the exchange. Another indicator of the training’s relevance is that 89% of the participants claim that the training gave

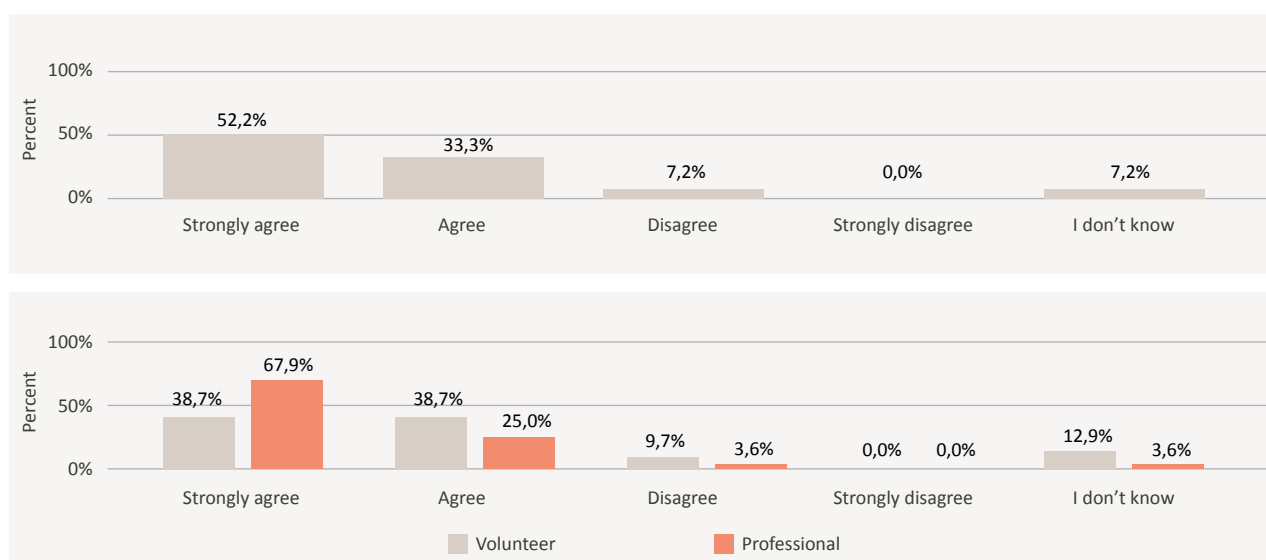
them specific tools to deal with challenges during the exchange. Again, we see that this first and foremost applies to the South participants, whereas 94% agree – compared to the North participants, where 34% disagree.

FIGURE 8: The training gave me specific tools to deal with challenges during the job exchange: First table: Total answers. Second table: Answers divided between South and North participants.



The partners agree that the Norec training is relevant. Partners in the professional programme are more positive than partners of the volunteer programme, and partners from the South are more positive than the North partners.

FIGURE 9: (Partner-survey) Because of the training, it is easier for the participants to execute their work during the job exchange at our organisation: First table: Total answers. Second table: Answers divided between Volunteer and Professional participants.



2.1.5 Impact

To what extent has the Norec courses generated significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects? In this review, we have found impacts on the Norec preparatory courses in two ways;

- The most significant impact of the Norec preparatory training is that it has enabled the participants to **deal with challenges and situations occurring from cross cultural meetings both during and after their exchange**, especially through the intercultural training. It has also contributed to deal with and overcome different situations occurring during their exchange that are caused by culture differences.
- Secondly, the training on psycho-sociological resilience has **led to de-stressing and a more efficient adaption to a new working and living environment**. This finding seems to have impacted both North and South participants.
- Thirdly, the training on global issues has given the participants a broader understanding of themselves (and their exchange) and has also contributed to

participants taking a more active role as a potential change agent. The training has mostly impacted participants from the South. Several participants from the South highlighted that the **training has made them more likely to chip in ideas on how they can contribute**, either at their home organisation or through entrepreneurial ideas and initiatives.

2.1.6 Recommendations

For the Norec preparatory training, we recommend the following actions for increased impact:

RECOMMENDATION 1: Look closer into how the training can better contribute to fulfilling North participants' training needs

North participants and partners are less satisfied with the training than their South colleagues. We believe that a focus on how to increase North participants training is needed. This will also benefit the programmes and the trainings, as it most probably will contribute to improved motivation and excitement among all the attendees.



RECOMMENDATION 2: Look into how the days may be filled with training, without exhausting the participants

The training sessions are perceived as long, with difficulties in keeping motivation up. Some of the topics may be transferred to e-learning or digital training (before or after the physical course). Norec can also look into how excursions may be a stronger and more integral part of the training, by using the training location as a means of dealing with learning topics in the course. By including the location as a methodology of the training, it will allow for more diversity in the training, in addition to interactive and participatory training.

2.2 NOREC’S HOMECOMING SEMINAR

2.2.1 Learning objectives

The overall objective of the homecoming seminars is to prepare the participants for re-integration, and for knowledge sharing and organisational learning for the partner organisation.

Homecoming seminars are compulsory for both Norec programmes. For the volunteer programme, the home coming seminar is only provided by the partner organisation, while **Norec provides the homecoming training for the professional programme, through Norec Training 2**. Norec’s homecoming seminar lasts for a week, running parallel to Norec Training 1, and the purpose is **to prepare the participants for a long-term contribution and engagement in the workplace, as well as in the local community, after returning home.**

During the homecoming seminar, the participants are encouraged to identify and express new personal and professional learning. As well as their experiences, how results from the exchange may contribute to the sustainable development goals and how to communicate this when returning home. Potential challenges related to re-integration are addressed, offering a set of tools or strategies to meet these challenges and turning them into opportunities.

Below, we assess the effectiveness, relevance and impact of Norec’s homecoming seminar (Norec Training 2). We also present recommendations for increased impact of the homecoming training. The partner organisations’ homecoming training will be reviewed and analysed in the next chapter.

Summary

Norec succeeds in achieving their learning objectives for their homecoming seminar, which is to prepare the participants for the re-integration and the homecoming. The homecoming seminar for the participants contributes to:

- Identify and express their learning, including their successes and failures in the exchange process.
- Describe challenges related to homecoming and re-integration, and to develop strategies to prevent, minimize or overcome these challenges – at the personal level.
- Plan how the experience may be used to increase impact as agents of change when returning home, particularly among the South participants.

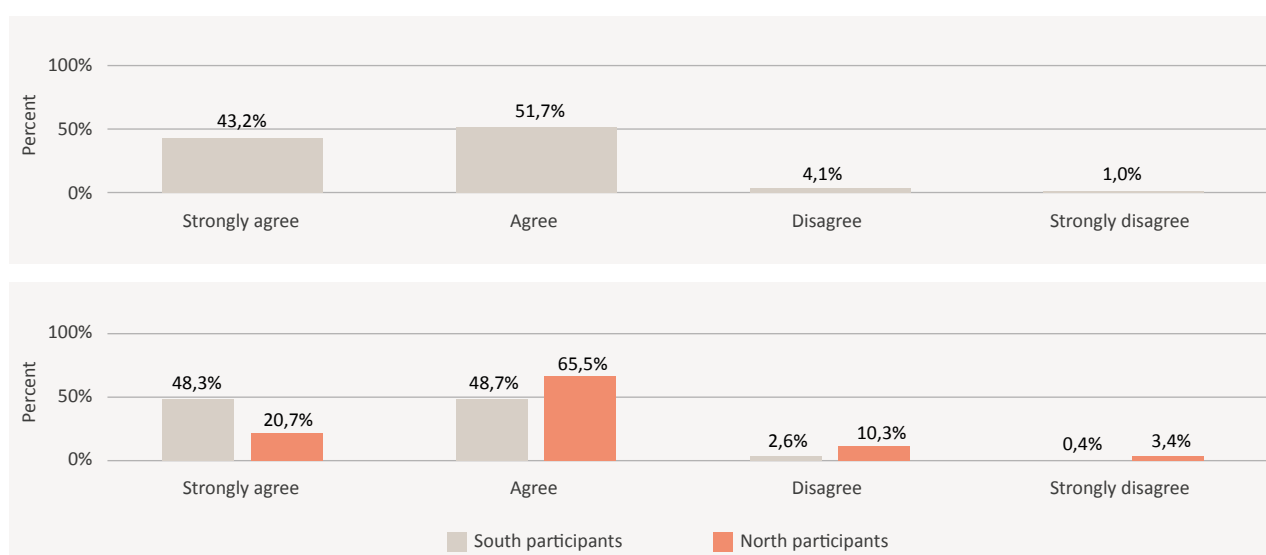
2.2.2 Effectiveness: To what extent Norec reaches its learning goals

Identifying and expressing learning

In this section we will look at effectiveness and to what extent Norec reaches its learning goals. The following elements will be described further: Identifying and expressing learning; Describing and planning for dealing with personal challenges related to homecoming; Planning how to increase the impact as change agents.

The professional participants' survey responses demonstrate that the Norec homecoming seminar succeeds in contributing to participants identifying and expressing their learning, as well as their successes and failures in the process. As illustrated in the figure below, 95% participants agree that the homecoming course made them reflect on what they had learned and how they could use the new knowledge and skills acquired from the exchange. Again, we see that South participants are more positive than North participants.

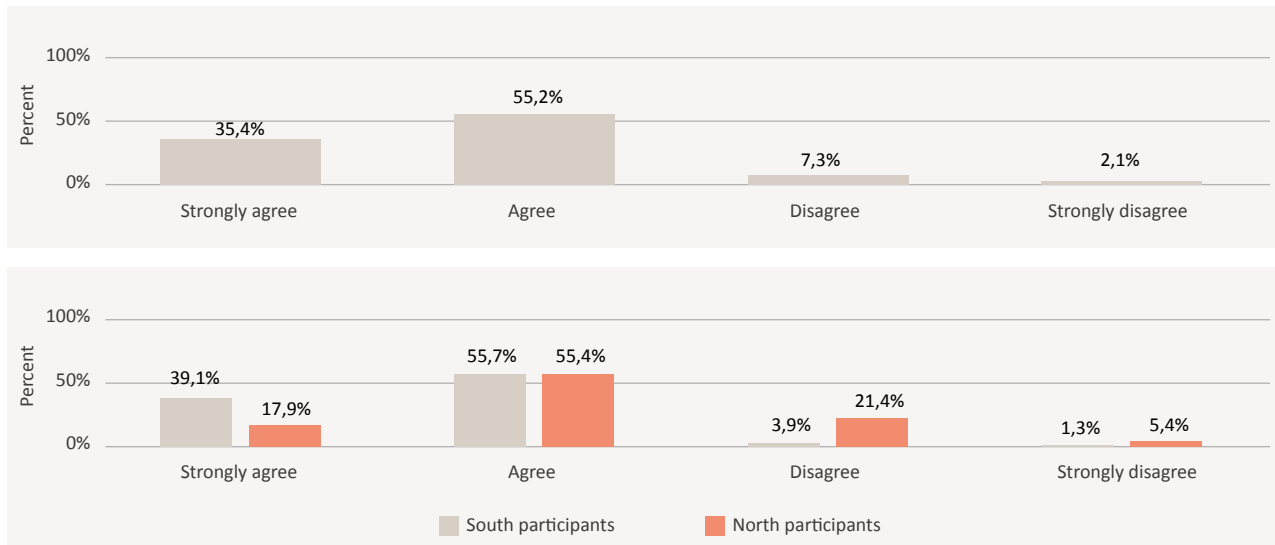
FIGURE 10: The course made me reflect on what I have learned and how I can use the new knowledge and skills acquired on the exchange: First table: Total answers. Second table: Answers divided between South and North participants.



Another 91% of the respondents agree that the homecoming seminar was a useful venue for sharing learning about which part of the exchange that worked well. This was also backed by the data gathered from the in-depth interviews. Several participants, mostly from the South, highlighted the importance of using the homecoming seminar as a space for reflection on the learning, both by listening to the other participants' presentations, but also by working on making their own presentation. Again, we see that South participants are more satisfied than their colleagues from the North. 95% of the South participants agree that the homecoming was useful for sharing learning, compared to 73% from the North.



FIGURE 11: The homecoming seminar was a useful venue for sharing learning: First table: Total answers. Second table: Answers divided between South and North participants.

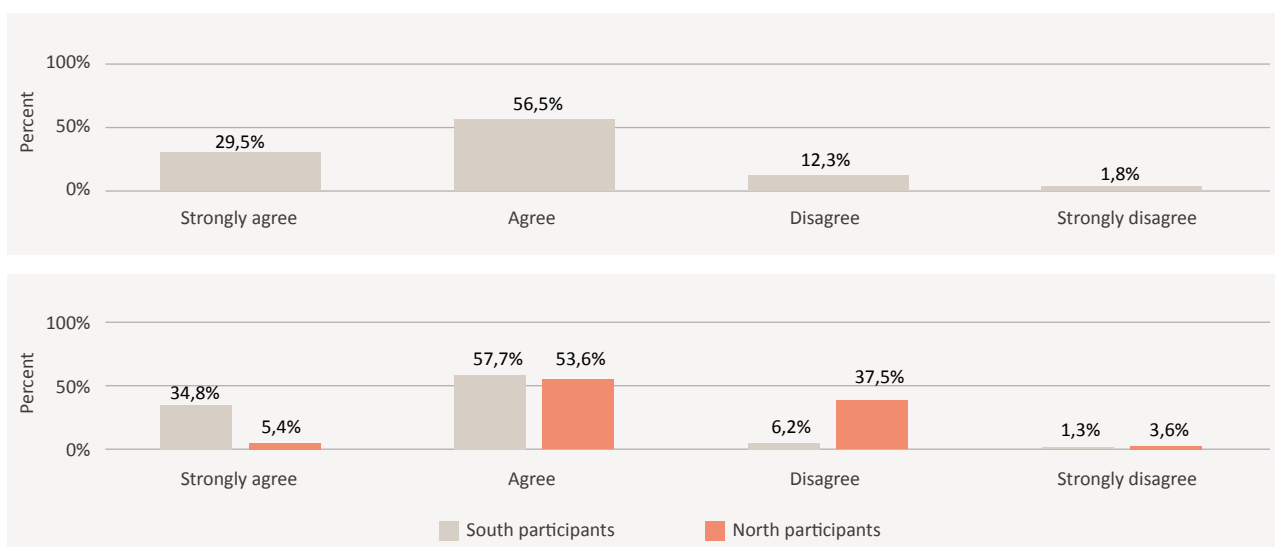


Describing and planning for dealing with personal challenges related to homecoming
Secondly, Norec’s homecoming seminar succeeds in assisting the participants in their re-integration, in particular at a personal level. Data from the interviews reveals that the psycho-sociological resilience, which participants achieved during the homecoming, was of importance for the participants. The seminar helped the participants **preparing for, and dealing with, the reversed culture chock.** The training contributed to self-consciousness around own values, as well as making the transition back home easier.

Planning how to increase the impact as change agents
Thirdly, the objective of enabling participants to plan how the experience may be used to increase impact as agents of change when returning home, is also met. 86% of the participant respondents agree that the homecoming seminar enabled them to use their new knowledge and skills to their employer. The goal seems to a larger degree be achieved among South than North participants, as the figure illustrates below.

For some of the South participants, it also led to new ideas on how the learning could be utilised on returning

FIGURE 12: The homecoming seminar enabled me to take into use new knowledge and skills to my employer: First table: Total answers. Second table: Answers divided between South and North participants.

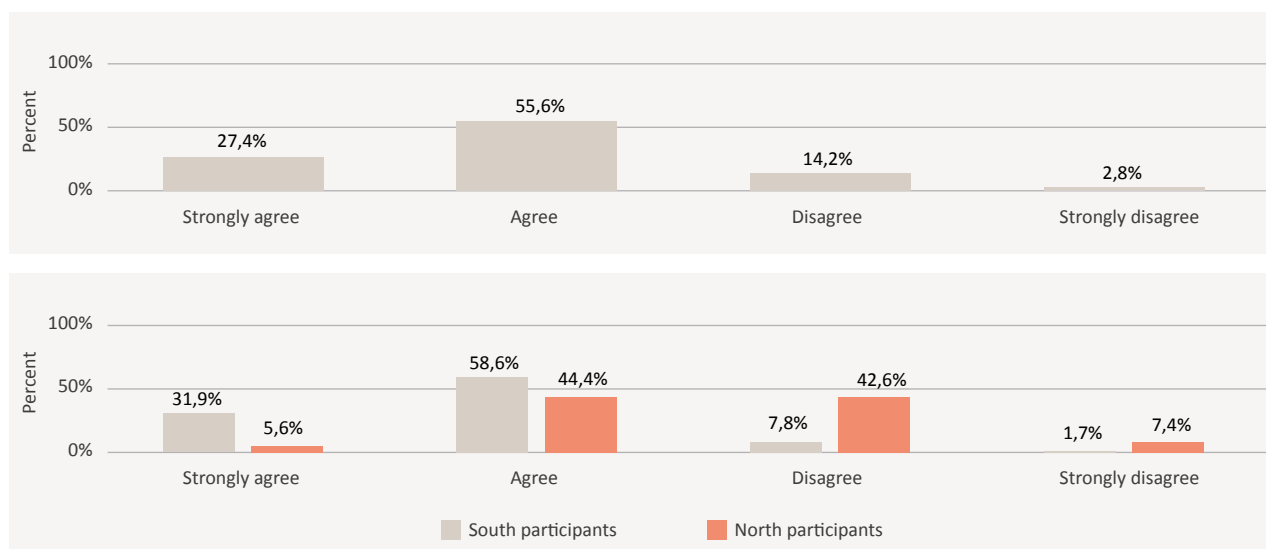


to the home organisation. North participants tend to find the homecoming seminar less useful and ask for more and better follow-up on the homecoming part in terms of re-integration in their job setting.

The participants also perceive the homecoming seminar as helpful in bringing innovative working methods or solutions to their employer, as shown in figure 13 below. South participants are again more positive than their North colleagues.

A related learning outcome that was revealed during the interviews, is that the homecoming seminars also **inspire the participants to take initiatives to entrepreneurship** - particularly South participants. Several claimed they came up with entrepreneurial ideas that they wanted to introduce to their home organisations. Few of these lead to any new initiatives at the workplace, but it nevertheless inspired the participants to think that it is possible.

FIGURE 13: The homecoming seminar helped me in bringing innovative working methods or solutions to my employer: First table: Total answers. Second table: Answers divided between South and North participants.



2.2.3 Relevance

In this section, we look at the relevance of the Norec homecoming seminar. According to Norec’s Theory of Change, there is an assumption that the individual learning will contribute to information sharing and hence organisational learning. Below, we look closer at whether the homecoming seminar contributes for successful re-integration of the participant. What is needed to prepare the participant for re-integration? And how can the participants’ learning contribute to organisational learning? How can the homecoming seminar be relevant in order to facilitate for these learning transfer processes?

As we highlighted above, Norec succeeds in assisting the participants with a smooth homecoming on the personal level. Norec’s learning theory is, however,

founded on a perception of learning as a process where people and organisations create, retain, and transfer knowledge within an organisation, and change their practices based on the new knowledge. Learning is thus perceived as a means of changing practices. According to Norec’s learning theory - all learning starts with the individual: An individual experiences something, reflects on the experience and shares the reflections with others in the organisation.⁶ Knowledge transfer implies that each individual / group / organisational unit do not need to learn from scratch, but can rather learn from the experiences of others. This implies that some key elements should be in place for learning to be accomplished. A key question, then, is:

⁶ Norec partner guideline for a job-exchange

What needs to be in place to ensure that the individual learning has an effect at the institutional level as well?

This evaluation demonstrates that although participants succeed in *sharing* new skills with the home organisations, there is a **lack of focus on how new skills and knowledge may contribute to organisational learning or increased competence**. In a previous study of Norec⁷, KPMG identified some key criteria for successful knowledge transfer from the individual to the institutional level: That there is an interlinkage between the institutions and the partnerships' goals and activities; that the programme is anchored within management; and that reciprocal and long term partnerships create trust and a mutual understanding of how the exchanges can benefit both parts of the collaboration.⁸ Data collected in this evaluation supports the findings of the previous report. This evaluation reveals that successful knowledge transfer might be increased if there are activities that explicitly connect the individual learning to the partner organisations' long term learning objectives. Several strong change agents, however, seem to have succeeded in taking into use and make their new achieved skills or innovations relevant to their organisations.

⁷ KPMG: (2019) Exchange of Staff: Study of Government Institutions, for Norec

⁸ KPMG (2019) *ibid.*

When it comes to the homecoming training, there is little collaboration between Norec and the partner organisations. Partners do not participate in the Norec training, and there are no guidelines for how Norec and partner organisations should complement each other in the preparation and actual homecoming. This, in turn, makes it difficult for the parties to understand how they can complement each other's training and thus contribute to a long term increase in the institutional capacity.

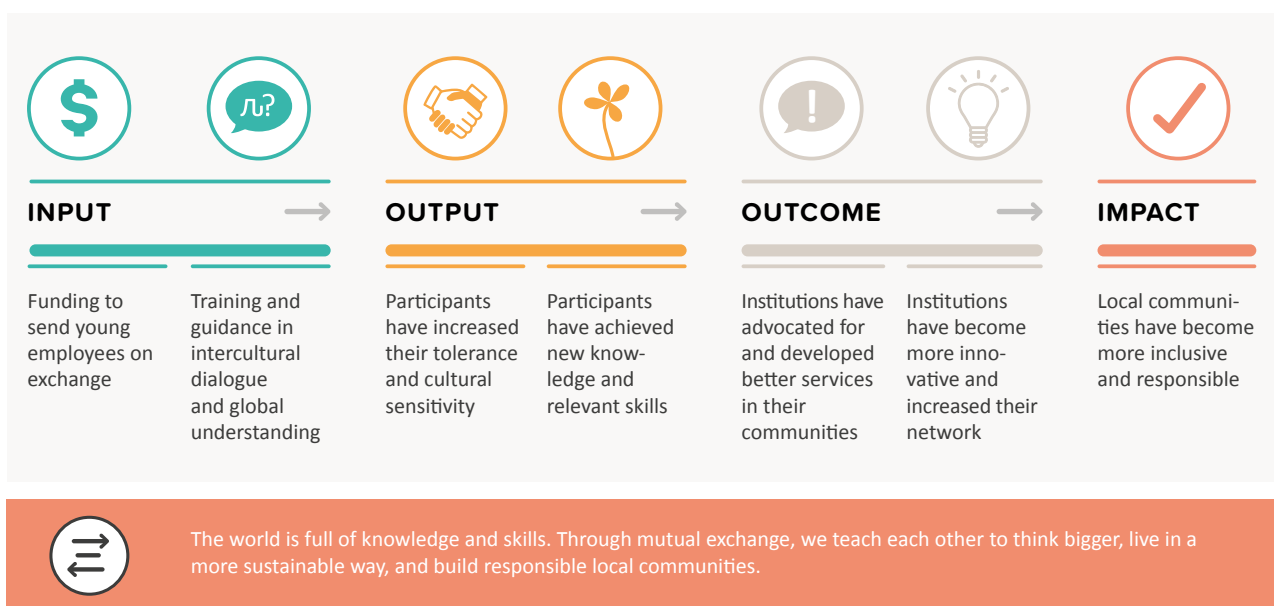
2.2.4 Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1: Correct the missing link in Norec's theory of Change

Norec's Theory of Change carries unstated assumptions regarding the transition from individual achievement at the output stage, to the institutional development at the outcome stage. This evaluation reveals that the same goes for the assumptions related to the learning outcomes from the homecoming training course. We argue that this missing link prevents the possibility to tap into and to realise the full potential of learning outcomes related to the Norec programmes.

Our key recommendation is for Norec to explore how their Theory of Change more explicitly may include a vision on how the new knowledge, skills and competence may be transferred from an individual (participant) to an organisational (partner) level.

FIGURE 14: Norec's Theory of Change



In this regard, there is a need to strengthen the catalysts as well as weaken the hindrances for change. KPMG's previous Study of Norec identified the following catalysts for institutional learning at a more general level:

- Partners have a clear strategy and plans for transferring the individual skills and competencies into organisational knowledge.
- Partners give room for innovation. New skills, ideas and solutions are often developed or adopted during the exchange, however, it is up to the partner organisations to facilitate that these are welcomed or integrated in the organisation.
- Norec and their partners have developed systematic approaches for the partner organisations' internal and external knowledge sharing.

Norec may consider using the homecoming seminar as a platform for ensuring knowledge transforming processes through the following activities:

- Develop a protocol/blueprint for how partner organisations shall plan for re-integration of the participant as well as their new knowledge/skills/competencies.
- Look into and consider if Norec should add a component where partners may (agile) apply for a Norec-fund (during the homecoming process) that allows for integration of entrepreneurial or innovative ideas that sprung out of the exchange.
- Norec's learning theory and anticipated avenues to institutional change should be addressed at the Norec partner trainings.

2.3 THE COMBINATION OF NOREC AND PARTNER ORGANISATIONS' TRAINING

Below, we assess the partner organisations' in-house training in the preparatory and homecoming phase. We thereafter discuss and assess the two models of training; the Norec training, and the partner organisations' in-house training. The chapter is finalised by providing recommendations on how the trainings may best complement each other in the future.

2.3.1 Assessing the partner organisations' in-house preparatory training

Partners are responsible for conducting preparatory courses as well as homecoming seminars for participants in the Norec volunteer programme, as well as the

professional programme. The partner organisations' in-house training is perceived as an *additional training* to Norec's courses, and participation in the partner's training is compulsory for all Norec participants. **Only partners in the volunteer programme receive funding from Norec to conduct training for the participants, and training related to the volunteer programme is thus the main focus of this assessment.**

The overall learning goal of the partner organisations' *in-house preparatory training* is that the participant **shall have sufficient knowledge and be mentally prepared to live and work in a new cultural setting, and to achieve the results of the project.**⁹ Norec has developed guidelines that presents what the courses should provide – as a minimum.¹⁰ Partners are encouraged to use a variety of participatory learning and teaching methods. The courses are decided by the partners, however, the plan for the courses shall be submitted and approved by Norec. Partner organisations are obliged to conduct a minimum 12 days preparatory course, where the training and learning shall include project-related issues, personal and cultural challenges, youth leadership, health and safety, and security.

Assessment of effectiveness

Below we will look at effectiveness and to what extent Norec reaches its learning goals and in particular three issues were revealed in this matter:

- It is difficult to assess the partner organisation's preparatory courses, firstly as **there are no structured means of evaluating and sharing experiences and learning from these courses.** Secondly, and due to the previous point, these courses are conducted in a great variety of ways – and hence with a great variety in the perceived learning outcomes of these courses. The in-house training makes up a rather substantial part of the volunteer programme budgeting. If this is to be continued, it is a need for clarifying the anticipated learning goals and objectives of the partner organisations' learning needs vs. the training provided by Norec. We will revert to and elaborate further on this point later.

⁹ Norec Guideline

¹⁰ Norec guideline partner preparatory courses (2017)

- The partners' preparation courses take many shapes and forms. Although some of the partners seem to provide 2 weeks courses, several of the partners are also conducting in-house preparation through a more ad hoc structure, consisting of a few meetings.
- In-house trainings where participants from the whole programme are gathered is perceived as particularly helpful, as it contributes to information sharing that prepares the participants for their actual work and host organisation prior to the exchange.

Assessment of relevance

We have previously highlighted that both participants and partners see a strong need for preparing the participants for the work-related aspects of the exchange, this also applies to the volunteer participants. The partner organisation's preparatory training should therefore extensively facilitate for the work-related preparation. There is a particular need for the participant to have a clear understanding of the project goals and results framework of the exchange, as well as clarity in the expectations surrounding their exchange. The latter includes clarifications about their role, tasks and responsibilities at work during the exchange. The in-depth interviews reveal that these learning needs in some situations are well taken care of, while they in other situations could be further improved.

The data collected through the in-depth interviews also reveals that several volunteer participants perceive the partners' preparatory training as more or less a duplication of the Norec training, instead of focusing more on the work-related preparation. This is understandable, taking into consideration that both trainings have more or less the same learning objectives. Several partners also highlighted that they found it difficult to know whether their training was complementing or duplicating Norec's trainings, as there is little information and guidelines on how the training may complement each other.

2.3.2 Assessing partners' homecoming seminars

In the volunteer programme, the participants take part in the partner organisations' homecoming seminars only. Participants on the professional programme participate in Norec's Training 2, which we assessed

above. The volunteer partner organisations' courses are developed by the partners and based on Norec guidelines. The length and content vary, and are based on the individual programme needs, however, 2 days is advised as a minimum.

The minimum learning outcomes, provided by Norec's guidelines, are that **the participants are ready and equipped to come home and execute their follow-up work; the partner organisations gather feedback and are able to evaluate the exchange; and that the participants are given individual follow-up.**

The way the partners organise their debriefing varies as well. Again, due to the absence of systematic reporting or sharing of lessons learned between the partner organisations and Norec, it is difficult to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the partners' in-house training efforts.

The pattern seems to be that the partner organisations prepare and facilitate for homecoming seminars that satisfies the participants needs. These homecoming seminars are prepared with the main goal to make presentations that the participants shall use as a means of information sharing upon their return. Secondly, the homecoming seminars provide lessons learned that can continue to improve the organisations' exchange experience.

As volunteer participants only take part in the partner organisations' homecoming training, we can extract data on how they perceive the training by excluding the responses from the professional participants in the overall survey. In the figure below, we see that volunteers in general are more satisfied with the homecoming seminar than the professional participants. 92% of the volunteers find the homecoming seminar as a useful venue for sharing learning, compared to 88% of the professionals. 86% of the volunteers agree that the homecoming seminar enabled them to use their new skills and competence to their home employer, compared to 85% of the professionals. And finally, 85% of the volunteers agreed that the homecoming seminar helped them bringing new or innovative working methodologies to their employer, compared to 82% of the professionals. Details are provided in the following three figures responding to three different statements:

FIGURE 15: The homecoming was a useful venue for me to share learning of the exchange

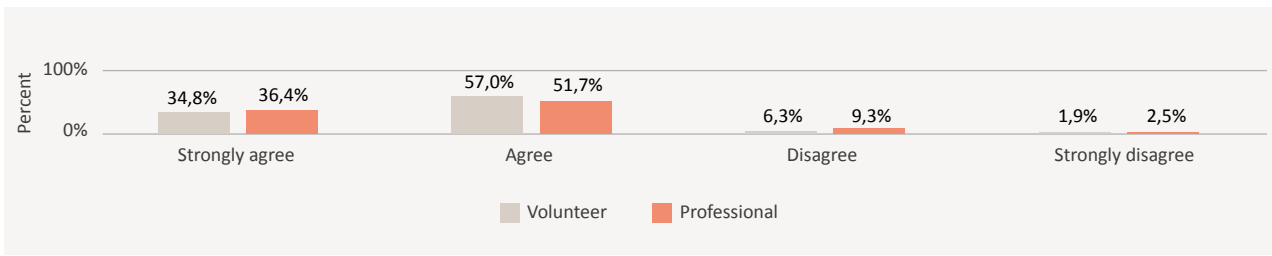


FIGURE 16: The homecoming seminar enabled me to take into use new knowledge and skills to my employer

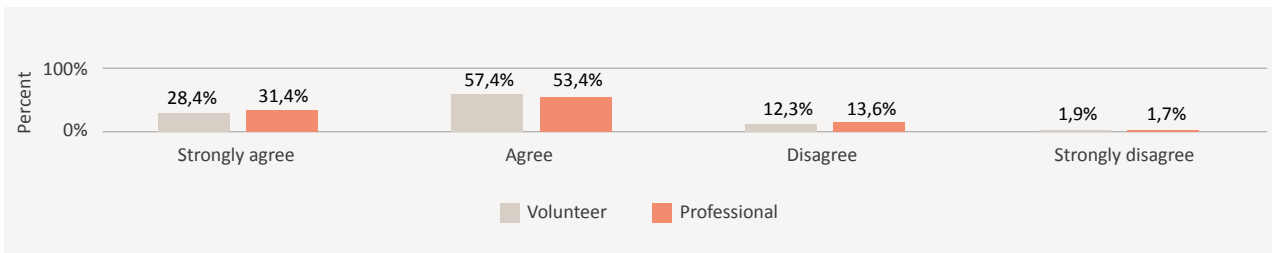
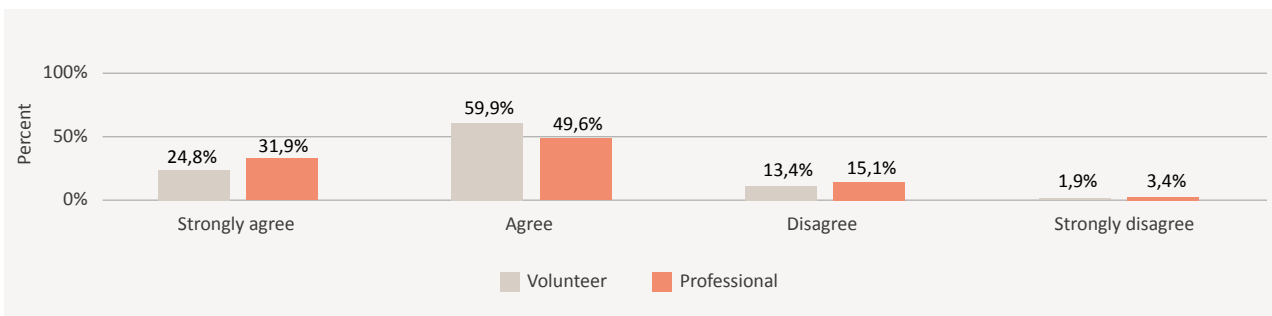


FIGURE 17: The homecoming seminar helped me in bringing innovative working methods or solutions to my employer



In general, this evaluation reveals that participants ask for more and better follow-up during the re-integration phase. Several highlight the need of starting the preparation for homecoming earlier – while they are still at the exchange. Others again, recommend to rather involve partner organisations in the Norec homecoming seminars.

It is also needed to say that partner organisations, beyond the compulsory homecoming seminar, contribute with activities aiming at knowledge transfer. Some partners create their own debriefs while others outsource the work to the HR department or a dedicated person within the organisation. Some partners have prepared the debrief, or homecoming, for weeks

or months in advance, while others seem to have an approach that is more ad hoc. There is also a great variance in how deep the organisations plan for the homecoming of the participants. Some of the partners have detailed routines for how to share and uptake new knowledge. While others, are more loosely organised, with only a couple of meetings as a means of information sharing. One partner, for example, has dedicated staff who firstly have a one-on-one meeting with the returning participants, in order to learn about their learnings, and thereby follow-up with a group discussion, which later is followed up by a seminar with identified stakeholders.

2.3.3 Comparing Norec training and in-house training

Strengths

The primary strength connected to partner organisations' preparatory training is that they provide job-related preparation for the exchange. This, as stressed above, is critical for ensuring a smooth adoption to the actual exchange. The partner organisations also provide important contextual input in the preparation phase, such as concrete information related to housing, transport, working conditions and so on. Partner organisations are also an important counterpart for Norec in the homecoming process, as the partners are responsible for the actual re-integration and homecoming. Below, we outline more in detail how this relationship and collaboration can be strengthened for enhanced outcomes of the exchange.

Cost

The financing provided by Norec for partner courses are currently set at 4,000 NOK per week per participant for courses conducted by Southern partners, and 8,000 NOK for Norwegian partners. It is interesting to see that there is a higher budget ceiling provided for training conducted in Norway, as Norec's own budgets (see section 2.4, below) show that Southern courses, on average, are more expensive than those conducted in Norway. Reasons for this may include that Southern partners can arrange own courses considerably cheaper than Norec, due to different requirements of security and easier logistics connected to arranging courses closer to home. The costs are assessed more in detail in the next section.

The courses conducted by Southern partners, therefore, are less costly than those arranged by Norec. The courses in Norway, appear to be approximately the same price as those conducted by Norec.

2.3.4 Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1: Develop a blueprint for the division of roles and responsibilities between Norec and partners in the training courses

Norec partners' training varies greatly and there are no structured means of monitoring or evaluating the collaboration between Norec and the organisations' preparatory and homecoming training. As seen previously, several partners requested more information

on how the collaboration on the training efforts can be further improved, such as templates or a clear division of roles and responsibilities connected to the various topics that are compulsory to include in the training. Norec staff, on their side, highlight that they do not have any tools to evaluate the partner organisations' implementation or pedagogic ability related to conducting training courses. As seen in the cloud below, do also partner organisations perceive their role as partners as important for the exchange. Partner organisations perceive that the most important thing they can do to improve their role in the exchange is to integrate the programme in the organisations, which in preciously what is also expected from them in the homecoming and re-integration process.

The current un-coordinated collaboration between Norec and its partners is, however, most probably hindering optimal learning outcomes for the Norec participants. With the current situation, the learning outcomes will rely on the organisation's ability to provide efficient and relevant courses. 12 out of 62 participants highlighted stronger relationships as an area of improvement, while 10 highlighted the opportunity of improving the integrating of the programme in the organisation.

Our data shows that some organisations are able to provide training, while others are not. Consequently, we recommend the following:

RECOMMENDATION 2: Norec training shall continue with minor adjustments:

- Norec should be the main provider of preparatory and homecoming training, as they are a centre of competence for exchange and consequently have more capacity and knowledge on how to conduct meaningful and relevant trainings.
- The Norec training is important for the vast majority of Norec participants, although one can conclude that the training is even more important for South than for North participants. South participants are asking for more training and Norec should therefore consider to slightly prolong the course for South participants (for example digitally).
- North participants, on the other hand, often find the courses a bit too long, and not as relevant as South participants. Norec should therefore consider shortening the training for the North participants.
- The Norec training is valued as an important meeting place for both North and South

CLOUD 4: What could your organisation improve related to your role in the exchange?



participants, where people from all over the world meet, connect, share and learn from each other. The courses should therefore continue to be a meeting place between all Norec participants.

- It is important that “new” and “old” participants meet during the training as well, so we recommend Norec to continue to facilitate for a common, physical meeting point between participants in Training 1 and 2.
- Norec may consider offering a course consisting of two parts; one initial (and compulsory) course (for example 3 days, for all), followed by an additional (and volunteer) course (for example 2 days, for South participants). This might be a good solution for maintaining a meeting place for all, yet the possibility to prolong the course for South participants, in addition to shortening it for the North participants.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Partner organisations should focus on job-related training:

- Partners should continue with training, however, their focus should be on job-related aspects.
- We recommend the partner organisations to facilitate a 3-step-training process: 1) An initial 1-2 days training with home partner, concentrating on project goal, result framework and expected

role, tasks and responsibilities, 2) followed up by a formalised “meeting session” between “new” and “old” participants during the Norec training. This will allow participants to discuss challenges, entry-points and context-specific issues related to the exchange period. 3) The preparation phase may be concluded with a 1-2 days introduction seminar at the host organisation, where the participants are introduced to all workers, and where the participants sit down with their leaders to agree on expectations, tasks and responsibilities for the exchange.

- Partner organisations should have a compulsory homecoming training as part of the Norec programme where they facilitate for professional re-integration and dissemination and uptake of new knowledge from both programmes. Norec may provide guidelines and funding for this activity.
- *Partners should to a greater degree be part of the Norec-trainings*, as this ensures a better collaboration and understanding of how the partners can complement and follow-up Norec’s training. 95,9% of the respondents in the partner survey claimed that they wanted to be more involved in the trainings for the participants. This can be done by for example giving them the responsibility of facilitating a workshop at the Norec training. In line with the recommended 3-step-

process mentioned above, this can be done by one representative from the partnership always participating and having the responsibility for conducting the “meeting session” between new and old participants.

- Norec’s role in the homecoming phase should be to help identify learning and facilitate for information sharing, as they do today. This preparation might start earlier in the process, by digitally preparing the participant for assessing their own learning. The homecoming seminar will then focus on sharpening the learning outcomes at the individual learning.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Norec may also develop a strategy for enabling the participants’ individual learning to capitalise in the organisation’s capacity building:

- Norec should firstly decide and define how they want to contribute to organisational learning in their ToC, then design a process for ensuring the anticipated learning goals.
- Norec can in addition set up a planned mid-term meeting during the exchange where the partner, participant and programme advisor meet. In this meeting, they can go through some of the goal of the homecoming course and let the partners prepare for it.
- Norec should make a plan for the partner’s customer journey (partner’s life cycle), so that they work more structured with partner training. This will involve several structured points where Norec has partner training.
- E-learning during the exchange can also be sent out so that it reminds the participant of tasks that can be done along the way. The partners should also be informed, and perhaps involved in, this.

2.4 COST-EFFICIENCY

Ensuring cost effectiveness of the training has been a concern of Norec in recent years. About five years ago the duration of both the preparatory courses and the homecoming seminars were reduced in order to cut costs. The key reason for the cut was to reduce duplication and overlap in the period that was cut, but cost was also a factor. Although some of the course instructors felt that something might have been lost by

cutting the number of days to a standard five days for both courses (1 and 2), the consensus, also from Norec staff, appears to be that the present format is sufficient. In fact, some of the interviewees, including participants, preferred it.

The main part of the training cost is the expenses of the participants. In the table below we see the costs of courses arranged by Norec in 2018 and 2019. The costs include expenses relating to venue, instructors, and travel of instructors and Norec staff, but not travel by the participants. The average price per participant for both years is between nine and ten thousand NOK. This, however, hides large variations in price. Kampala is the most expensive venue with costs between fifteen and eighteen thousand NOK. Bangkok and Johannesburg are also on the expensive side with costs between ten and sixteen thousand NOK per participant. On the other end of the scale, are events arranged in Norway (Førde and Hurdal) at less than seven thousand NOK per participant, Lusaka and Harare at around five thousand NOK, Kathmandu at six thousand NOK and Nairobi at below four thousand NOK. It should be noted that the Youth Camps are usually one day shorter than Courses 1 and 2, so that accounts for some of the price difference.

Therefore, there seems to be some scope for selecting venues that are less pricey than the hitherto preferred venues in Kampala, Bangkok and Johannesburg. The rationale for having used these venues have been that there are limited options of venues that can accommodate up to 100 or more guests, have the necessary facilities, satisfy the standards of safety and be relatively easily accessible.

It seems relevant to note, that average cost per participant for UN Volunteers (UNV) is USD 2,400, inclusive of tickets and instructors.¹¹ This is just under 22,000 NOK with current exchange rates. Assuming an average ticket price around 10,000 NOK, it may seem that they average at around 10,000 NOK per participant which would place them in same range as the average Norec cost. UNV arranges their courses in Bonn, and their regional office locations in Bangkok, Nairobi, Colombia,

¹¹ Interview with Niels Lohmann, Team Leader Capacity Development, UNV Bonn, 10.11.20.

TABLE 1 Costs Norec training events 2018 and 2019

Courses 2018	Course 1	Course 2	Youth Camp	Intro	Total	Total cost	Cost per participant
Bangkok, februar	26	8			34	632 016	18 589
Johannesburg, september	36	35			71	0	0
Bangkok, august	11	23			34	527 846	15 525
Bangkok, oktober	19	30			49	511 554	10 440
Johannesburg, august	28	37			65	860 651	13 241
Kampala, november	21	32			53	935 226	17 646
Kampala, april	35	29			64	1 363 856	21 310
Intro, lusaka and harare				43	43	220 153	5 120
Youth Camp, Kampala, januar			98		98	752 729	7 681
Youth camp, Hurdal, januar			79		79	372 428	4 714
Total	176	194	177	43	590	6 176 457	10 469

Courses 2019	Course 1	Course 2	Youth Camp	Intro	Total	Total cost	Cost per participant
Bangkok, april	39				39	490 436	12 575
Bangkok, oktober	28	25			53	587 839	11 091
Kathmandu, juni				20	20	91 217	4 561
Hurdal, August			219		219	1 203 079	5 494
Kampala, april	34	27			61	930 059	15 247
Førde, april				12	12	77 357	6 446
Førde, august				15	15	101 230	6 749
Johannesburg, august	33	35			68	1 008 702	14 834
Johannesburg, februar	52	24			76	995 634	13 100
Johannesburg, september	28	35			63	879 771	13 965
Kampala, november	23	20		26	69	1 127 492	16 340
Hurdal, januar			86		86	482 508	5 611
Kampala, januar yc			110		110	1 122 643	10 206
Kathmandu, februar		7		16	23	138 000	6 000
Nairobi, februar				23	23	91 564	3 981
Dhaka, november				16	16	104 461	6 529
	237	173	415	128	953	9 431 992	9 897



Dakar and Istanbul. Of those, the costliest are Bangkok and Nairobi.

Norec is already in the process of planning ahead for the next approach for training. As part of this, they are considering costs and CO₂ emissions, as detailed in a presentation shared with the evaluation team.¹² The presentation makes the following observations and recommendations:

- Not to conduct trainings in Norway for South-South participants to reduce CO₂ emissions.
- Selection of venues based on accessibility, safety and visa requirements. Recommended venues: Nairobi for Africa, Kathmandu for Asia, and Bogotá for Latin America.
- Smaller groups will require less personnel (reduce CO₂ emissions). The reason being that smaller groups could be run back-to-back, thus, allowing personnel to support two, or more, courses for each travel.
- Combine partner trainings and intro-seminar in one trip with same staff.

¹² «Norec training procurement. Trainings from August 2021» non-dated presentation shared with the team.

These all seem like sound recommendations that could contribute to both reduction of CO₂ emissions and promote cost-efficiency. We recommend that Norec also adds the cost as a factor in the selection of venue for future training.

2.5 DIGITALISATION

2.5.1 Goal achievement in e-learning

Norec highlighted already in 2014, a need for looking closer at how modules or part of the physical training could be delivered through webinars and e-learning. The idea behind digitalising parts of the course, was that this could contribute to more efficient training, as well as enabling a stronger and more continuous follow-up with participants. A pilot project, with interactive modules for e-learning, was consequently recommended.¹³

To date, Norec has developed e-learning modules as part of their preparatory courses. We have not

¹³ Rapport fra kursprosjekt, Norec, 8.sept. 2014

found any clear learning objectives specifying in what ways the e-learning is thought to contribute to, or complement, the other learning parts taking place through the physical trainings. There are, however, six e-learning modules available on Norec's webpage; (1) Agents of Change, (2) What is Norec, (3) Roles and Responsibilities, (4) Rights and Duties, (5) Health and Security and (6) Communication. Thus, **it is reasonable to hold that the aim of the e-learning courses is to prepare the participants for the topics that will be executed at the physical preparatory course** (Youth Camp and Norec Training 1, Preparatory course).

Each e-learning module consists of a video, of 1-3 minutes length, followed by tasks written below the video. For example, the tasks related to module 1 include to find a notebook and to answer two questions that will be brought into the physical preparatory course. There is no interactivity built into the e-learning, such as questions or tasks, nor are there any solutions that ensure, or give feedback to Norec, that the e-learning course is fulfilled.

The participant survey reveals that only 13% of the (294 in numbers) respondents took the e-learning course. It is important to keep in mind that the survey also includes respondents who participated in 2017/2018, when e-learning was not part of the training courses, so the numbers from this survey should only be seen as a tentative result. Notwithstanding, it corresponds with the only other review we found on e-learning courses, which was the review of Johannesburg preparatory Course February 2017. In this course, only ¼ of the participants had seen the e-learning video prior to the preparatory course. Some of the reasons, for the South participants, was that the connectivity was not good enough to see the video, or that it was too expensive and not available. The report concludes that it would be easier to send the video to the partners, whom in turn could download the videos and make them available.

In our survey, we see that out of those who viewed the e-learning, South and professional participants were more likely to attend the e-learning than the North and volunteer participants. Apparently, the e-learning course is not systematically shared among the volunteers. In addition, in the in-depth interviews we got the impression that several of the participants knew about the e-learning training, without having attended it.

The participants who attended the e-learning had quite variable statements regarding what was perceived as useful, illustrated in the cloud below. As we can see, time saving, and management of expectations are perceived as some of the most useful outcomes of the e-learning. 44 participants responded to this open question.

CLOUD 5: What aspect of the e-training module was useful in preparing for your exchange?



In sum, we see that **Norec participants find e-training modules useful.** However, if the goal is to use the e-learning as a means of preparing the participants for the preparatory course, Norec is still far from reaching this objective. More targeted information sharing about the e-learning modules and alternative ways of accessing the material, can help improve.

2.5.2 Lessons learned from Norec e-learning and webinars

Due to Covid 19, Norec held their first homecoming seminar as a webinar only this year, 2020. 53 participated in the webinar. Norec's own quest back from the webinar had a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is "not relevant" and 5 is "very relevant". The participants scored all of the courses as very relevant, giving them score of 4,5 or higher. One of the respondents in our interview participated in the webinar and gave it excellent feedback, saying it helped him understand what he had learned during the exchange, as well as preparing him for giving a digital presentation of his experiences.

The ongoing global crises of Covid 19 has taught us all a new normal, where use of digital platforms is no longer perceived as an opportunity, but as something needed in order to deal with similar future shocks. But also, as a

response and responsibility in dealing with the ongoing climate crises. Simultaneously, internet infrastructure and connectivity are improving all over the world. The potential of doing things differently, for the better, is thus more present than we have seen for a long time. This is also mirrored in the data collected for this evaluation.

Several participants and coordinators claim that digital platforms do not necessarily create a distance to each other, despite its non-physicality, it may also create proximity. People all over the world has for the last 9-10 months been forced into digital meetings and encounters, through solutions such as Teams and Zoom, whereas the latter in addition facilitates for group workshops and interactivity.

As Norec works with international partners from developing countries, access to internet and connectivity for all partners and participants is a major potential barrier for Norec's digitalisation efforts. A means of dealing with this challenge, is to ensure access through Norec partners. Either by participants conducting the training at the partners' office, or that the partners, in one shape or form, has been given the responsibility to ensure access to the digital training.

It is also relevant to note that MS Denmark also stated in interview with the evaluation that they used to have misgivings about providing training virtually, but have since embraced it, citing considerations of resources and timing. Part of the justification is that although there are aspects of the training that is not ideally covered by virtual sessions, this is at least in part compensated by physical training sessions at the host organisation.

A note on inclusiveness

Only one participant with disabilities was interviewed during this review, so there is little data available for analysing inclusiveness. It is important to note, that this person is reluctant to Norec moving the training to digital platforms. He claimed that participants with special needs will not be able to fully understand or use the Internet and thus have limited access. This can also be seen in light of the importance of physical presence due to language barriers during the training courses. In the in-depth interviews, several claimed that when language barriers were met during the training, the trainers of the sessions would often teach through

other tools, such as games and group work based on drawing, instead of speaking. This kind of flexibility, and thus ability to facilitate for those with special needs, will most probably be more difficult when the learning is more standardised on digital platforms.

2.5.3 Recommendation for further digitalisation of Norec training

The evaluation has generated the following recommendations for further focus on the digital aspects of Norec training:

- *Parts of the physical courses may be moved to digital platforms.*
- *Develop digital courses that enable interactivity and participation.*
- *Develop digital platforms that enable a more continuous and closer follow-up throughout the exchange period.*

RECOMMENDATION 1: Parts of the physical courses may be moved to digital platforms

There is a unison agreement among Norec staff and Norec participants and partners, that digital platforms may not substitute the physical training taking place in Norec. Nevertheless, it is clear that part of the training may be moved to digital platforms. As we stressed above, today's e-learning course are mirroring the topics that are part of the Norec preparatory courses. We recommend that digital courses are developed to rather *supplement* the preparatory course.

All in all, based on data from the survey as well as the in-depth interviews, we see that participants agree that parts of the Norec training may be moved to digital learning platforms. The participants are on one hand sceptical to a digital shift, as they are afraid that this will remove the physical meetings and the current training arenas that enable in-depth participation and reflection. On the other hand, participants acknowledge, particularly due to the ongoing pandemic, that there is a need of digital preparedness and to use digital platforms more than they have done previously.

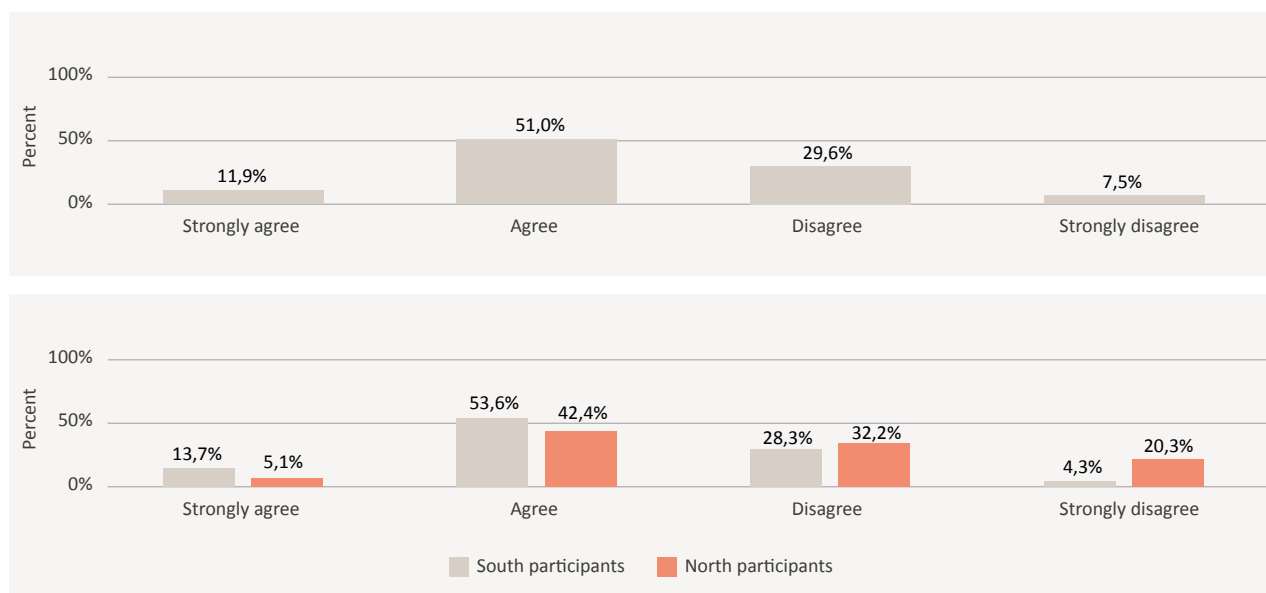
In this regard, the participants also see the potential of moving some of the components to digital platforms. 63% of the participant survey respondents agree that part of the courses can be moved to digital learning platforms, as opposed to 37% who disagrees. South

participants are more positive to digitalisation than the North participants. 67% of the South respondents agree that parts of the courses may be moved digitally, compared to only 47% of the North respondents.

The in-depth interviews reveal some of the reasons for South participants being more positive to digitalisation. Firstly, digitalisation enable a *prolonged training*, for example by combining the Norec preparatory course with in-depth online training. Secondly, digitalisation also enable a more *in-depth training*, in particular during the exchange. In these cases, digital platforms could according to the participants be used to follow up with group conversations on various topics during the exchange period.



FIGURE 18: Part of the courses can be moved to digital learning platforms: First table: Total answers. Second table: Answers divided between South and North participants.



According to Norec and external course instructors the following topics are suitable for online training:

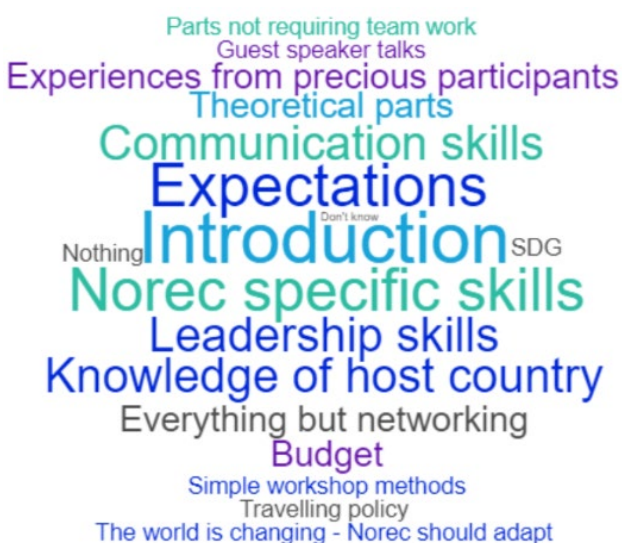
- Participants' *expectations for the preparatory course*.
- Questions related to *culture shock*.
- Information about the *participants' rights and duties*. The part of the course may contain an application that includes a digital checklist, as well as an application where the participant confirms fulfilled course.

- *Information about Norec and Norec's history*.
- Parts of the *communication training* may be provided as e-learning after the preparation course (as a digital follow-up module, where the participants i.e. will write and publish a story in a SoMe channel).

The Norec participants agree, highlighting that the participants' expectations of the preparatory course, as well as the more theoretical parts of the course that do not require teamwork may be moved to digital plat-

forms. This, they hold, will free time for more in-depth conversations and reflections during the preparatory course. Below are the open answers from 133 respondents, and we can see that introduction, Norec-related issues as well as expectations are perceived to be possible to move to digital learning problems. Approximately five people have responded to the most common wording.

CLOUD 6: Which part of the course can be moved to digital learning platforms?



A rationale for transferring some of the learning to digital platforms is that it will free time at the Norec preparatory course. There are two reasons for doing



this. Firstly, the current training is perceived as being too packed, making it difficult to keep concentration and learning during the whole training. By transferring some of the training to digital platforms, in advance, it will also give room and space for dwelling more into topics that need time for reflection and learning. Secondly, it will also contribute to a better preparedness for the course. This is in particular relevant for South participants, who according to the in-depth interviews, often attend the Norec courses without being well enough prepared by their home organisation. The digital training will therefore ensure that important and crucial information is given to all participants in advance of the preparatory course.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Develop digital courses that enable interactivity and participation

Norec’s training methodology is interactivity and participatory. The same pedagogical principles should therefore be maintained at the digital platforms. For the preparation phase, we believe that the e-learning/digital training to a large degree may be executed without online and live meetings with other participants. Rather, Norec may develop generative learning programmes where the participants actively interact and participate in a learning module.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Develop digital platforms that enable a more continuous and closer follow-up throughout the exchange period

Both participants and partners call for a closer follow up of the participants, both during the exchange, as well as after their homecoming phase. We believe this follow-up work is most efficient when conducted at a digital platform, as this will allow for tailored training, without increasing the carbon footprint.

Digital solutions like Zoom may be used as a platform for following-up participants after they have conducted the preparatory course. Zoom, allows you to break into groups and to online workshops. The Zoom meetings may also include follow-up sessions, where larger or smaller groups gather. The following recommendations were put forward by the partners from our partner survey:

- More online training throughout the whole learning cycle.
- Online meetings for the participants during the exchange.



- During the transition to homecoming: Online meetings for the exchange participants, where they can share their experience and learning.
- Regional level learnings.
- Online webinars for Norec partners.

volunteers. The average age of volunteers is 32 years. The type of onboarding varies according to the previous experience of the volunteers. Most of the volunteers do their onboarding courses virtually through a UNV portal.

Again, it is a need to emphasise that several Norec partners and participants are in areas with low connectivity and poor internet. The digital training modules should therefore be technically able and apt to tackle these challenges. In addition, it is important to explore the inclusion of person with disabilities in the online platform and functions being developed. Further, it is recommended to include a registry for Norec, system for reminders and consider whether some of the courses should be compulsory to ensure competency building for all. If completion is registered, those with difficulties (language, access or other reasons) can be contacted and followed-up individually.

The volunteers fall into two categories: 1) Youth volunteers (up to the age of 29), and 2) Professional



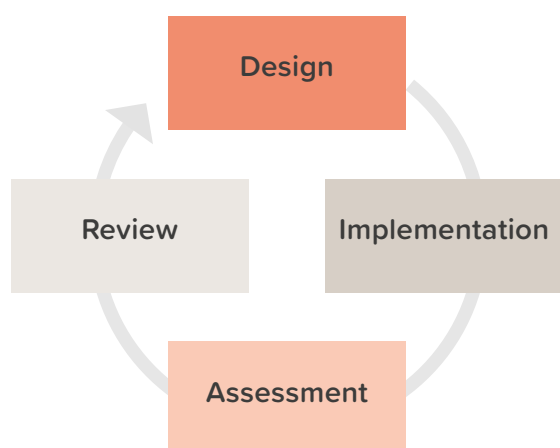
3. SUPPORTING A CENTRE OF COMPETENCE

As stated by the Norec Strategy 2022, the organisation has a unique knowledge on international exchanges:

“Norec is the only centre of excellence for international exchanges in Norway. We exist to spread knowledge and provide inspiration for both businesses and individuals. The organisations benefit from arenas for the exchange of experience and long-term follow-up. Individuals develop both the ability and desire to create a better future after their exchange period has come to an end”.

As detailed in the Terms of Reference, Norec now wants to explore how Norec’s training courses and the training team can position Norec as a centre of competence on exchange cooperation. Norec’s approach to exchanges builds on decades of experience, and as this evaluation shows, it has developed a structure for training that participants find to be broadly useful and effective. The idea of a centre of competence implies an organised approach to knowledge management, including the processes of collecting, organising and disseminating knowledge.

FIGURE 19: Policy cycle



A useful way of looking at how knowledge management and learning is integrated in the approach to training, is to look at the policy cycle, as illustrated in figure 19. Ideally, implementation is assessed and reviewed in order to enable systematic and continuous improvement in the design.

The **design** of the training courses is currently the responsibility of the instructors. They are provided with the objectives of their respective course modules and stand free to develop them as they wish. Norec’s instructors have long experience in developing and delivering this type of courses. As seen by the course feedback, they consistently get positive feedback from participants. Nevertheless, interviewed external course instructors expressed some surprise that given the very long experience that Norec (and previously FK) have with this type of courses, and of exchange programmes, that they were not more pro-active in giving examples of best-practice and / or got more involved in the design of the courses.

The **implementation** is also the responsibility of instructors. Norec staff routinely participate in courses and witness modules delivered by instructors. A suggestion by course instructors, is that it could be valuable for the instructors to witness the courses delivered by other instructors. This is not being done today.

Courses are routinely **assessed** by participants, using standard questionnaires. As we have seen in this evaluation, these are generally very positive, and testify to the good quality of the courses. Interestingly, the participant assessments are not routinely shared with the instructors. Many of them ask for them, and do get them, but this is not standard practice. Also, there is no set mechanism for Norec staff to give feedback to instructors. Therefore, the instrument for assessment that are in place are not operationalised in a way that ensures that the data collected is fed into the policy cycle.

The **review** phase is the weakest link of Norec’s policy cycle for its approach to training. There is no set mecha-

nism in place for periodic pauses to discuss and review experiences. Several instructors suggested that it would be useful for instructors and Norec staff to meet periodically to review experiences and to discuss how the existing approach can be further refined, providing the as of now missing link in the policy cycle back to the **design** phase.

The factors described above show that there is room for improvement in the way that knowledge on training is collected and used to ensure continuous learning. As one of the work groups commented during the workshop facilitated by this evaluation, the training courses are data collection points. They provide valuable sources for learning. Particularly the home-coming seminars can prove valuable sources of information, not least on experiences of how the individual efforts can have contributed to institutional change. Interestingly, the Swiss organisation Comundo also noted in interview that the debriefs is a source of information that deserves more attention.

A key requirement for achieving the ambition of becoming a centre of competence is to establish a depository of learning or best practices. This could be in the form of a knowledge bank consisting of the following elements:

- A database where all training programmes are stored, including training materials, participants evaluations and notes from any post assessments performed by instructors, Norec staff or others.
- Structured information collected from homecoming seminars for gathering learning in a more systematic way on what has been achieved during exchanges, and what are the key opportunities and challenges in exchange programmes. Examples of what this could entail includes establishing a database for “most significant change stories”.
- Documents of best practice. This could include academic literature, material from other comparable organisations, relevant evaluations, etc.
- Links to comparable organisations, relevant blogs and / or discussion fora, and other online sources that

relate to training, but also the wider issue of using exchanges to effect change on an institutional level.

The knowledge bank could be made accessible to participants, partners and wider audiences through Norec’s website. This could also include a discussion forum to invite input from participants, instructors, Norec staff or other visitors. The knowledge bank could provide valuable structures for continuous learning and establishing networks for engaging external partners and dissemination and exchange of information.

3.1.1 Recommendations to support a centre of competence

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Establish a training database

Existing training material should be collected and placed in an online database. This should include course designs (including *dreiebok*), and reports from courses. The database could also include relevant materials from peer organisations, academic and professional reports, and material on relevant models for training. The database could be launched at an event with participation from partner and peer organisations. The database could also extend its scope beyond the training element and include more general information on good practice for international exchanges.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Establish a process for a “post-mortem” for each training course

After each course, feedback forms should be shared between instructors and Norec staff, and some time should be set aside for discussion and sharing of experiences. This does not have to take up much time. A meeting of just one hour could be enough, provided all participants receive participant assessments beforehand. Such meetings are probably most practical to arrange virtually. It would not be a big investment, but it would be important as a mechanism to ensure that there always is an opportunity to take stock and for individuals to raise any pressing issues or come with questions or suggestions.



RECOMMENDATION 3: Establish an online knowledge bank

Set up an online knowledge bank containing training data base, information collected from homecoming seminars (with “most significant change stories”), relevant materials and links, as detailed above.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Formalise a Norec corps of instructors

The Norec instructors provide a valuable core of expertise and excellence that could be further engaged to build Norec as a centre of competence. Periodic events could be organised with the instructors to exchange experiences and ideas. This could include engaging the corps of instructors in the building of the recommended database.

Norec could also consider engaging the instructors in a supporting role for participants during the exchanges. Provisions could be made for instructors to touch base with participants during the exchanges to address questions and concerns. This could be a cost-effective way of ensuring that issues are dealt with before they become bigger problems.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Consider engaging life coaches for on-demand services to participants

It may be relevant to note an approach by UNV – where they offer participants the services of life coaches during the exchanges. They have found this to have a positive effect. The Norec instructors could serve a similar function and / or Norec could consider to also engage coaches. Although Norec is not the employer for the exchange participants, and it could appear risky to take on this type of role, there are a couple of mitigating factors to consider:

- This would be an on-demand service, and if provided by professional coaches, the service would be at an arms-length distance from Norec.
- Also, by definition, any discussion in coaching sessions is between coach and coachee.

The benefits of providing this service could outweigh the costs and any perceived risks.

4. CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSION 1: Norec succeeds in reaching their learning goals related to their training courses, both at the preparatory and homecoming phases.

Norec reaches the learning goals of their training courses. In the preparatory courses they meet their overall goals. Participants reflect over their exchange as a part of a development partnership and to put it in a global context. The courses also encourage active participation. Participants find the preparatory course relevant and useful, however, South participants are more satisfied than North participants. The Norec training are in particular meeting the participants' training needs in intercultural communication, global understanding, psycho-sociological resilience.

Norec also succeeds in achieving their learning goals for their homecoming seminar. The training contributes in particular to a smoother homecoming at a personal level. Norec succeeds in helping the participants to identify and express their learning, to describe challenges related to homecoming and re-integration, and to develop strategies to prevent, minimize or overcome these challenges.

CONCLUSION 2: Partner organisations are important counterparts in the Norec training, particularly their responsibility and role in preparing and facilitating for the work-related preparation and homecoming. Currently, there is lacking a clarity on how Norec and the partner's trainings may complement each other.

It is difficult to assess the partner organisation's preparatory and homecoming courses as there are no structured means of evaluating and sharing experiences and learning from these courses. Consequently, these courses are conducted in a great variety of ways. The current un-coordinated collaboration between Norec and its partners is most probably hindering optimal learning outcomes for the Norec participants. With the current situation, the learning outcomes will rely on the organisation's ability to provide efficient and relevant courses. Our data shows that some organisations are able to provide such training, while others are not.

CONCLUSION 3: The missing link between individual and organisation learning in Norec's ToC is negatively affecting the learning outcomes from the exchanges.

Due to little collaboration between Norec and the partner organisations at the homecoming stage, it is

difficult for the parties to collaborate on how they can complement each other's training, and thus contribute to a long term increase in the institutional capacity.

CONCLUSION 4: Norec's courses are cost-efficient in relation to comparable partners

Norec's training courses are run in a relatively cost-efficient manner. The one organisation consulted that had directly comparable courses, UNV, had approximately the same cost courses as Norec. There is, however, still scope for further reduction of costs, primarily through identifying less costly course venues. The courses, particularly the home coming, could also be used more systematically for generation of data for use in future exchanges on the experienced effectiveness of the programme. This would contribute to cost effectiveness by extracting more value from the trainings.

CONCLUSION 5: There is a strong potential for increasing the usage of digital platforms in Norec training.

The current e-learning is under-utilised and the areas for improvement are many. Parts of the courses may be moved to digital platforms, however, the digital courses should enable interactivity and participation – in line with Norec's overall pedagogical approach. A more comprehensive investment in digitalisation will also enable a better follow-up of participants during the whole exchange period (and afterwards).

CONCLUSION 6: For Norec to succeed in its ambition to act as a centre of competence, the organisation needs to strengthen its practices and systems of knowledge management.

Norec is a world leader in delivering exchange programmes, but in order to fully become a centre of competence the organisation needs to strengthen its systems of knowledge management. This can be achieved by establishing a database to organise and present resources and experiences, placing this and other relevant material in an online knowledge bank. There is also a need for more systematic reviews of current training programmes and the impacts they have. Finally, there may be a not fully realised potential in the instructors used in the training that could provide added value through the establishment of an instructor corps that is involved also during exchanges, not only before and after.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1 INTERVIEW LIST

The in-depth interviews consisted of:

- In total 13 participants, from Norway, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe
- In total 5 representatives from partner organisations, 3 from the North and 2 from the South
- In total 6 staff from Norec
- In total 3 external course instructors
- In total 2 representatives from peer organisations

APPENDIX 2 DOCUMENT LIST

DOCUMENT NAME	DATE	DOCUMENT CATEGORY AND LINK
STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS:		
Norec Strategy 2022	2020	Strategy
Norec Annual report	2017 & 2018	Annual report
Norec partner guideline for a job-exchange	2017	Report
Norec's Theory of Change	2014	White paper
Norec guideline	2020	Guideline report
REPORTS FROM PEER ORGANISATIONS:	Waiting for response from Norec and the peer organisations	
COURSE REPORTS:		
Kurskalender 2017-2019	2019	Course overview
Trainings for professionals		
Dreiebok 2019 og Dreiebok med rapport	2019 & 2018	Guideline report
Norec FK Professional Training: An Overview and learning objectives	No date	Report
Final report: Revision of training curriculum for partners and participants in FK exchanges.	2013	Report
Rapport fra kursprosjekt	2014	Report
Kursrapport Johannesburg, September 2017	2017	Report
Evaluation report: FK Preparatory Course, 15th – 26th February, 2016 Indaba Hotel, Johannesburg, South Africa	2016	Evaluation report
Final Report - Preparatory course Kampala	2016	Evaluation report
Kursrapport Johannesburg, Februar 2017	2017	Course report
Report Bangkok October	2016	Evaluation report
September Johannesburg spreads,	Sept 2019	Programme and information
Training Johannesburg, August	Aug 2019	Programme and information

Training for volunteers (Youth)		
D17 guideline courses	2018	Course guidelines
Brosjyre, Youth Camp Kampala Januar 2019	2019	Programme and Information
Brosjyre, Youth Camp, Hurdal 2019	2019	Programme and information
FK Youth Camp	2016	Programme
YC Brosjyre January 2015	2015	Programme
Partner Participants Training		
Norec guideline partner preparatory courses, 2017	2018	Guideline Courses
Preparatory course, Media for mentors. Slum dwellers International, Kenya and Prayasam	2017	Programme
Overall evaluation preparation	No date	Evaluation report
Prep Course report	2017	Evaluation report
Young Spirit, report of the preparatory training, Myanmar	2017	Evaluation report
Partner application: Høgskolen i Molde	2019	Application and Budget
Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC)	2019	Application and Budget
Internal Evaluation of FK Youth Exchange Preparatory course	2016	Evaluation
Latin-Amerikagruppene I Norge (LAG)	2018	Application and Budget
Partner application: Røde Kors	2019	Application and Budget
RK – Pre-departure programme	2019	Programme
RK - Evaluation of individual learning plan for strengthening language skills	2019	Evaluation
RK – evaluation red cross	2017	Evaluation
SEED Forum	2019	Application and Budget
SAIH	2019	Application and Budget
SAIH – kurs for Norec-deltakere Homecoming	2019	Programme - courses
SAIH – Results report round 2018-2019	2019	Report
The World Association for Girl guides and girl scouts	2019	Application and Budget
WAGGS – Preparatory course sessions	2019	Course sessions
COURSE EVALUATIONS / QUESTBACK:		
Exit	2019	Participant questback surveys
Nøkkelspørsmål til KPMG, exit survey	2017	Participant Questback surveys
Alumni	2019	Participant Questback surveys
Partner	2019	Participant Questback surveys
KPMG utvalgte spørsmål fra partner survey	2019	Participant Questback surveys
Norec Youth Camp		
Feedback on FK Youth Camp	2020	Questback
Norec professional		
QuestbackFeedbackonFKNorwayTrainingpart1, Bangkok, October, 2016	2020	Questback
Feedback on FK Norway Training part 2, Johannesburg, August 2016	2020	Questback
Feedback on Norec Preparatory and Homecoming training, Bogotá, March 2020	2020	Questback

APPENDIX 3 TERMS OF REFERENCE

Vedlegg I Oppdragsbeskrivelsen

Terms of Reference

Evaluation of Norec's training courses for young people travelling to work abroad

Background

Norec, originally FK Norway, was established in 2001 as an agency of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Every year, Norec funds job-exchanges, sending some 600 volunteers and staff abroad – for a period of three months up to a year – to participate in global partnerships and work on projects. Working in partnerships, organisations from Norway and specific countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America apply to Norec for funding to facilitate these exchanges of cooperation. Norec's activities form part of Norway's international development policy. Since its establishment, FK Norway/Norec has provided training courses for young people travelling to live and work abroad.

In 2018, Norec's mandate was expanded, making it a centre of competence on exchange cooperation. In this capacity, Norec will emphasise best practice and facilitate knowledge sharing in the field. Norec's training courses are viewed as one of the key building blocks in establishing the centre of competence.

In 2020, Norec entered a new strategic period with a new vision. The overall objective for its training courses is to "strengthen partnerships to find solutions to the challenges addressed by the UN Sustainability Development Goals and Agenda 2030." To achieve this, Norec's training section has designed the courses to encourage active participation and utilise a variety of training methods, enabling participants to share, learn and teach.

Since 2015, the overall goals for the courses offered and funded by Norec have been 1) to ensure that Norec partners and participants are better equipped to achieve both short- and long-term results, and 2) to try to create arenas where ideas and experiences are exchanged across partnerships. These training objectives have been linked to fostering critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, and gaining a global understanding, and a knowledge of intercultural and interdisciplinary communication and cooperation.

The courses offered by Norec are intended to support Norec's exchange model, in which participants are assigned tasks while working abroad that provide them with new skills and knowledge, which they then take back to their own organisations. As organisations succeed in involving and retaining participants who have been on a job-exchange, the new skills and knowledge acquired yield increased and improved capacity development in the form of effectiveness, planning and delivery within the organisation. New knowledge, innovative methods and new skills strengthen the organisations, enabling them to deliver better results and services. This in turn strengthens the organisations' work to influence and contribute to societal development.

The exchange model has been implemented in two different programmes: one for professionals and another for volunteers. The main differences in the two programmes have been the participants' work experience and educational background, the type of work tasks, and the nature of the organisations that the two groups have worked for whilst on job-exchange. Over the years, the two programmes have developed in different ways, whilst maintaining some similar characteristics. Norec is now on the verge of merging the two programme portfolios into one model. One difference in the two programmes has been the courses offered to prepare participants travelling abroad for a job-exchange. In the volunteer programme, Norec has previously brought the volunteers together for a three-and-a-half-day Youth Camp with the aim that "all participants shall have an understanding of their own role as participants and FK Norway's role in Norwegian development policy, and become part of the FK Norway global network of partners, participants and exchange programmes." The volunteer programme included funding for in-house training by the home and host organisations in order to develop and implement a two-week course to prepare participants for their work abroad. The goal of this training has been that "the participant shall have sufficient knowledge and be mentally prepared to live and work in a new cultural setting, and to achieve the goals of the exchange programme."

The home and host organisations have also used Norec funding to arrange homecoming seminars for participants in order to facilitate a smooth and easy return to their home countries. The goal of these seminars has

been to ensure that “the participants are ready and equipped to come home and execute their follow-up work, to follow up each participant individually, and for the partner organisations to gather feedback so they are able to evaluate the exchange cooperation.”

In the *professional programme*, Norec has offered participants a one-week course before travelling abroad and on return to the respective home country. The intended learning outcomes have been that the participants “1) see the world from multiple perspectives, reflect upon their positions in a global society, and are prepared for engagement as global citizens and agents of change, 2) are able to describe and discuss how they – as FK participants – are part of a larger community of FK partners and participants who share a common vision and common values, and 3) can identify personal and professional challenges related to living in another cultural context, and can identify and use specific tools and approaches to prevent, minimise or overcome these challenges.”

Additionally, Norec also offers training via e-learning modules and in April this year, homecoming courses were conducted via online webinars for the participants. For more information on the training courses, please see the course descriptions in the Annex or visit Norec’s website.

As well as the process of merging two portfolios into one programme, Norec’s ambition to actively reduce its carbon footprint is also important and will in turn also influence how Norec conducts its future training courses. At the same time, the focus on the environment must be aligned with Norec’s Strategy 2022, which aims to increase the number of young people sent on a job-exchange through Norec-funded projects. To sum up, aiming for more participants per course, fewer international flights, and a more thorough and all-round approach calls for careful scrutiny of Norec’s courses in order to design and create comprehensive, cost-efficient and environmentally friendly training courses for the future.

Purpose

To evaluate to what extent Norec’s different course models contribute to relevant and meaningful job-exchanges at individual level, and as a consequence contribute to the goal of increased capacity development and organisational learning at institutional level,

and to make recommendations on how Norec can develop its courses towards a cost-efficient programme with a decreased carbon footprint and capacity for a higher number of participants. To provide input on how Norec – as a centre of competence on exchange cooperation – can capitalise on the competence acquired and retained from organising, designing and carrying out training courses.

Evaluation questions

The list is not extensive or limited to the following questions:

1. Establish to what extent Norec’s current training courses reach their learning objectives, and make recommendations for revising these goals
2. Assess the usefulness and relevance of the courses from the partners’ and the participants’ point of view
3. Assess the impact that the different training models have had for the young people that have attended the courses at an individual level, both during the job-exchange and after their return
4. Establish the strengths, improvement areas and costs of the in-house training offered by the participants’ host and home organisations and of the training courses offered by Norec, and compare the two models.
5. Establish to what extent the course timing, size, programme, mix of participants and course location help to uphold a cost-efficient approach and meet the needs of the participants and Norec partners at the same time.
6. Make recommendation as to how Norec’s training courses can best be complemented by the other elements, such as in-house training conducted by Norec partners, mentoring of participants and/or e-learning, and other initiatives.
7. Investigate and suggest how Norec’s training courses and the training team can support the establishment of Norec as a centre of competence on exchange cooperation

Scope

The report should focus on and differentiate between various training courses offered by Norec and the in-house training offered by the participants’ home and host organisations. However, in-house training varies greatly in quality depending on the experience the different organisations have in offering training in

general, and more specifically in offering preparatory and briefing courses. Where relevant, e-learning should be included in the assessments and recommendations.

For the purpose of this evaluation, the period to be assessed should be aligned with the period of the training objectives from 2013 to date for the volunteer programme and from 2015 to date for the professional programme. Approximately 4170 participants have completed Norec training courses in this period. In 2013, Norec supported 90 partnerships in 44 countries, while in 2019 Norec is supporting 85 partnerships drawn from 24 different countries. The total training costs in this period amounted to MNOK 69,400.

Norec's target group is young people aged 18 to 35 with diverse backgrounds in terms of country of origin, level of education, profession, class, gender, ethnicity, culture, religion and proficiency in English. Hence, the learning outcomes for these participants will depend on Norec's ability to be inclusive and adapt the teaching and environments to their needs. The evaluation should specifically address this, and in particular look at the inclusion of young people with disabilities and participants with low levels of language proficiency.

The evaluation report should focus on how the courses can supplement and strengthen the projects funded by Norec. Hence, the impact of the training for the participants and their home and host organisations is of particular importance to this assignment.

Methodology

While Norec will not specify any methodological requirements, we envision a mixed methods approach. As such, the report could incorporate the following:

- An analysis of the training materials, training modules and teaching methods
- Semi-structured interviews and/or focus group interviews and/or surveys of participants who have attended training courses and of staff in their home and host organisations, Norec staff and external facilitators
- A quantitative analysis of relevant data from Norec's own surveys and potentially other available data. Data from Norec's surveys from 2015 to date. Although Norec has a large collection of results from professional training courses, Youth Camps and exit surveys of former participants in Quest back,

the available results may not clearly differentiate between Norec's own and partners' training courses. A survey was also conducted of the recent e-learning.

Work plan and timeline

30 June	Deadline for submitting an offer
July	Review of data from surveys, training materials, etc.
15 August	Deadline for submitting an inception report
September	Data collection and development of reports
12 October	Submission of draft report
26 October	Submission of final report
November	Presentation to Norec

Users of the evaluation

Norec will be the main user of this evaluation. The findings and recommendations from the evaluation will shape Norec's future approach to the preparatory and debrief sessions for people going abroad to work. Norec is also in the process of developing into a centre of competence, hence the findings from the evaluation will also be used to develop Norec's future position as a communicator, provider and source of knowledge and research on exchange cooperation.

Limitation

From monitoring the data from surveys and questionnaires, we already know that some of the training objectives have not been met and that we have not been able to measure these in a satisfactory and adequate manner. However, it is crucial for us to see that the knowledge gained on the training courses prepares the participants for a successful stay while living and working abroad, and that they can return home and share the knowledge and skills they have learned in a meaningful manner. Due to Covid-19, Norec will not conduct any training courses in the period during which this assignment will be carried out, so there will not be any opportunity to observe instructions or methods applied. However, we believe that the training material, schedule and interviews will give the evaluator(s) sufficient knowledge of the content of the training to assess the quality of the courses. Likewise, all interviews with people outside Norway will have to take place virtually.

Deliverables

The main report should contain an executive summary, findings, conclusions, recommendations and annexes. The report must be written in plain language; please refer to the website of The Language Council of Norway for more information.

The consultant(s) should be available to present the findings to Norec staff in November 2020. This entails presenting the findings and recommendations and being available for questions from staff.

Professional qualifications

- Ability to conduct both qualitative and quantitative research
- Strong analytical skills
- Experience from evaluations of training courses and/or educational programmes
- Knowledge of didactics, comparative and/or multicultural education
- Knowledge of development cooperation
- Experience of participatory research approaches
- A strong background in and experience of working with groups of people from diverse and intercultural backgrounds.
- A flexible and inclusive approach in order to accommodate marginalised groups such as people with disabilities
- Strong oral and written communication skills
- Fluency in both Norwegian and English

Budget considerations

The evaluation is estimated to be completed in 50 working days as specified in the offer, plus revisions as required based on feedback from Norec. Hence, the evaluator(s) shall submit an offer to Norec for a fee covering 50 working days.

Expenses for travel within Norway necessary to carry out the evaluation will be reimbursed in accordance with Norwegian travel regulations for government personnel. Flight tickets must be economy class, and environmentally friendly travel is strongly preferred.

Contact

For any questions regarding the evaluation, contact http://eu.eu-supply.com/app/rfq/rwlenrance_s.asp?PID=273116&B=DFO Bids should be submitted at http://eu.eu-supply.com/app/rfq/rwlenrance_s.asp?PID=273116&B=DFO, and should contain an

outline of the assignment including the methodology, a financial offer with the total costs excluding VAT plus CVs for the consultants, short description of the 3 latest relevant reports not older than 3 years, and a resumé of previous relevant reports or evaluations.

APPENDIX 4

About the courses (training models):

Norec asserts that successful job-exchanges depend on proper preparation and training of and by participants and partners. Norec's training courses are a necessary and compulsory supplement to the 'in-house' training. Below are brief descriptions of each training model for Norec participants provided by Norec or Norec partners.

1. Training for participants in Norec's professional job-exchanges
 - a. **Training 1** (preparatory course): Norec Training 1 is a compulsory preparatory course for Norec participants going on a professional job-exchange. Participants attend the course just before their job-exchange starts or a few weeks after the start of their job-exchange. The course runs for five days, and is planned, arranged and evaluated by Norec. Training 1 modules are facilitated by Norec staff and external facilitators. Most participants in Training 1 have no prior preparatory training from their home organisation. As a supplement to the classroom modules, all Training 1 participants have one scheduled meeting with Norec staff to discuss project-specific topics that could not be addressed in plenary sessions. Participants are drawn from varying combinations of partnerships from Norway and countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The average number of participants at each Training 1 course ranges between 25 and 40. Courses combine participants bound for North—South, South—North and South—South job-exchanges. Training 1 will be called "Preparatory Training" from 2021. An outline of the various modules with their respective learning objectives is enclosed/will be made available to the consultants.
 - b. **Training 2** (homecoming seminar): Training 2 is a compulsory five-day homecoming seminar

for all participants in the Norec Professional programme. The course provides a platform for participants to debrief on their challenges and milestones, and to map acquired skills and learning from their job-exchange. Participants prepare for reintegration and how to effectively share the knowledge and skills acquired from their job-exchange experience on return. The training courses are held in Bangkok, Johannesburg and Kampala. Webinars were held for some participants in April 2020 due to the Covid-19 situation. The average number of participants at each Training 2 course ranges between 25 and 40. Participants are drawn from varying combinations of partnerships from Norway and countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Courses combine participants who have been on North—South, South—North and South—South exchanges. Training 2 courses run parallel to Training 1, giving participants the opportunity to share their experiences and give advice to participants who are about to start their exchange. As during Training 1, Norec staff have individual meetings with all participants. Training 2 will be called “Homecoming Seminar” from 2021.

2. Training for participants on Norec’s volunteer exchanges

- a. **Preparatory course (organised by respective Norec partners):** The Preparatory course is a twelve-day compulsory training course for all participants on Norec volunteer exchanges. The overall objectives for the preparatory courses are specified by Norec, while the content and length of each module are decided by respective partners. Preparatory courses are planned and conducted by the respective home and host organisations. Participation is restricted to volunteers within the same partnership (those belonging to organisations exchanging among themselves). Norec partners can choose to conduct the preparatory course before or after the Youth Camp
 - i. Overall learning objective: Norec participants shall have sufficient knowledge and be mentally prepared to live and work in a new cultural setting, and to achieve the goals for the exchange programme (see attached D17 and training guidelines)
- b. **Norec Youth Camps:** Norec Youth Camps are three-and-a-half-day preparatory training

courses for individuals going on Norec volunteer exchanges. The Youth Camps are planned and arranged by Norec every January and August in Norway, as well as Uganda in January and Bogota in March. Youth Camps bring together participants from various Norec partnerships (exchanges) from organisations from Norway and countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, bound for North—South, South—North and/or South—South exchanges. Norec Youth Camps complement the preparatory training courses offered by the respective home and host organisation for participants on the Norec volunteer programme. The standard number of participants at Youth Camps has ranged from 95 to 215. All Youth Camps share the same overall objectives and learning outcomes, with minimal differences in content and topics due to availability of external facilitators. Evaluation is conducted by Norec. See Youth Camp guidelines for details

- c. **Homecoming seminar (arranged by the respective partners):** Norec provides partners with minimum learning outcomes for the homecoming seminar for participants on volunteer exchanges. The length and content of the homecoming seminars conducted by Norec’s volunteer partners vary based on individual programme needs. Norec recommends a minimum of two days for each seminar. Homecoming seminars are compulsory for all Norec volunteer participants, and are planned and conducted independently of Norec’s training section. Evaluations are conducted by the respective partners.

Some of the elements common to Norec-funded training courses include use of participatory learning methodologies and active engagement of all participants throughout the training. In addition, participants on Norec training courses come from diverse backgrounds in terms of country of origin, level of education, profession, class, gender, ethnicity, culture and proficiency in English, which is the official medium of communication. That said, the course set-up and interactions create additional dynamics for learning and sharing across cultural and interdisciplinary backgrounds. You will find more information about training courses for Norec participants here and in the attached training guidelines.



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